

RESEARCH REPORT

European Advertising Consumer Research Report 2014

Consumer Awareness & Impact of European Self-Regulatory Programme for OBA

Independent research conducted by Ipsos MORI on behalf of TRUSTe and the EDAA



TRUSTe Inc.
+44 (0) 203 078 6495
www.truste.com



European Interactive Digital Advertising Alliance
+32 (0)2 213 4180
www.edaa.eu

INTRODUCTION



We were delighted to work with the EDAA to extend our existing consumer research to cover 10 European markets and provide important benchmarking data for the future development of the EU Self-Regulatory Programme.

The results show the growing awareness and ongoing positive effect of this important self-regulatory initiative that gives transparency and control over advertising choices to European consumers and is achieving growing recognition and momentum amongst the industry and regulators.

As an approved Icon and Certification provider at TRUSTe, we are committed to the ongoing success of the EU Self-Regulatory Programme for OBA and we look forward to working with the EDAA and the Industry to deliver this.

Chris Babel, CEO TRUSTe



We're pleased to report on the results of the first full consumer research survey commissioned by the EDAA in conjunction with TRUSTe. This will set a benchmark for the Self-Regulatory Programme and the ongoing consumer awareness campaign.

The fact that consumers have used the YourOnlineChoices website and understand what the programme and icon means matches the over 1.5 million visits per month to the site that we currently receive.

The potential for increased trust towards the brand advertised talks to the greater traction that the programme is achieving in the market

Dr. Oliver Gray, EDAA Director-General

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The European Advertising Consumer Research Report 2014 provides a comprehensive picture of consumer attitudes and awareness of the EU Self-Regulatory Programme for Online Behavioural Advertising (OBA) across Europe.

The study was conducted by Ipsos MORI, on behalf of TRUSTe and the EDAA from 21 October – 10 November 2014 with over 10,000 consumers across 10 different European markets.

The countries chosen – Great Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Hungary, Poland and Sweden – were selected based on range of geographic spread and current implementation status of the EU Self-Regulatory Programme. Tracking data is available for certain findings from Great Britain where TRUSTe ran comparable research in 2012 and 2013.

The results show that awareness of the OBA Icon continues to rise and that consumer awareness campaigns can have an immediate boost as shown in Greece where 39% are familiar with the icon. Those who have seen the icon are choosing to find out more with around 1 in 3 consumers in Sweden and Greece are clicking on the icon rising to around half in Spain. The Programme can have a positive effect on attitudes too, with 54% in Portugal more favourable towards the idea of online behavioural advertising if they have a way to opt-out.

A summary of key findings include:

- Consumer awareness of the icon is highest in Greece (39%) where the most recent consumer awareness campaign took place
- Across four countries surveyed (GB, Greece, Portugal and Hungary) the recognition is significantly higher when the icon is accompanied by the Admarker text e.g. “AdChoices”
- Among those who have previously seen the icon, the proportion who report they have clicked on it is highest in Spain (49%)
- 1 in 25 respondents aged between 18-50 in the ten markets surveyed say that they have visited the <http://www.youronlinechoices.eu> website.
- Across the ten countries, the majority (57%) of 18-50 year olds who report they have visited www.youronlinechoices.eu correctly believe its primary purpose is to provide instructions to manage their advertising preferences.
- The Programme has the potential to improve consumer attitudes with 54% of respondents in Portugal saying that having the option of managing their privacy preferences and information about how adverts are delivered to them online would make them more favourable towards behavioural or interest-based ads.

BACKGROUND TO THE EU SELF-REGULATORY PROGRAMME FOR OBA

The majority of users want control over their privacy on the internet. However they also acknowledge the important role advertising online has to play in making content and services available at little or no cost. The EU Self-Regulatory Programme for Online Behavioural Advertising (OBA) seeks to strike that balance by empowering consumers with greater contextual transparency and control.

At the heart of the European Self-Regulatory Programme on OBA is an interactive pan-European icon to identify ads on all websites that are delivered to internet users through Online Behavioural Advertising (OBA).



This icon is a consumer-facing, interactive symbol that links consumers to mechanisms for users to control preferences, including an online portal, www.youronlinechoices.eu, where they can find easy-to-understand information on the practice of OBA as well as a mechanism for exercising informed choice – if they so wish, consumers may ‘turn off’ OBA by some or all companies.

The European Interactive Digital Advertising Alliance (EDAA) is the organisation responsible for administering the EU Self-Regulatory Programme for OBA across Europe and licensing the use of the icon and preference management tool.

Third Party participants that demonstrate full compliance with the Programme will be granted the EDAA Trust Seal from one of a number of approved independent certification providers.

TRUSTe, amongst others, has been approved by the EDAA as both an Icon and Certification provider for the EU Self-Regulatory Programme.

The Programme is enforced by the relevant advertising Self-Regulatory Organisation (SRO)¹ in each country (e.g. the ASA² in the UK). If businesses are not compliant then the enforcement sanctions could involve remedial action; a formal investigation, leading to the adjudication being published on the SRO’s website or bringing a company’s continued non-compliance to the attention of a third party’s potential clients and partners.

SRO Enforcement is based on the consumer complaints received. Further sanctions may apply if the third party is participating in the European Self-Regulatory Programme on OBA: removal of the Trust Seal and withdrawal of the OBA Icon. For non co-operative, serious or persistent and/or deliberate offenders the SRO may also refer the company to the competent national regulatory authority e.g. the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) in the UK.

¹ National SROs, under the umbrella of the European Advertising Standards Alliance (EASA). A list of European SROs can be found at: <http://www.easa-alliance.org/About-EASA/EASA-Members/European-SRO-Members/page.aspx/55>

² The Advertising Standards Authority (<http://www.asa.org.uk/>).

CONSUMER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Education is a core principle behind the EU self-regulatory initiative, and the EDAA launched a pan-European consumer awareness campaign in 2013 to help empower EU citizens to make their own choices about online advertising.

The campaign provides information about the OBA Icon and the YourOnlineChoices website to the general public. The campaign aims to increase awareness and understanding of the Programme, whilst enhancing consumer transparency and control. Consumers are empowered through greater awareness of their online ad choices and also learn how online advertising helps to fund sites and services they use.

The campaign ran in the UK, Germany and Ireland in the summer of 2013, in Greece from July to September this year and is still running in Sweden following an October start.

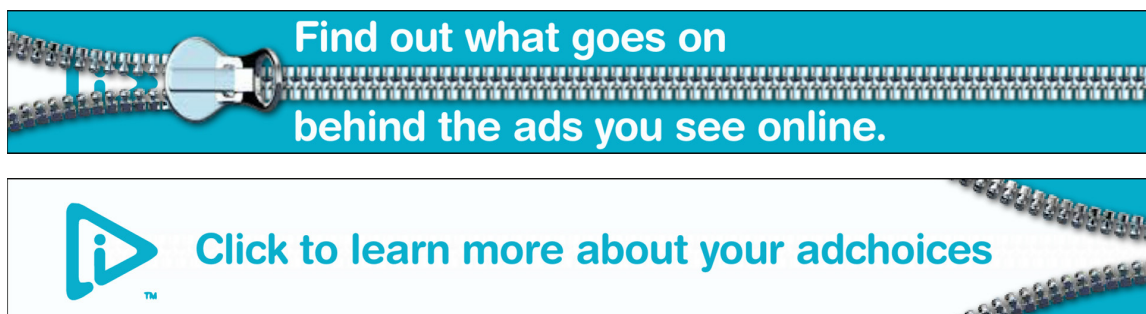
Further campaigns are due to run in France, Portugal and Finland before the end of 2014 bringing the total number of markets where the consumer awareness campaign has run to eight.

Examples of the creative are shown below (UK version shown, fully localised for European markets).

OBA “Reveal” execution (300 x 250)



OBA “Behind” execution (728 x 90)



SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Sampling

Interviews were carried out on Ipsos MORI's online i:Omnibus service using a quota sample of adults who are members of Ipsos' European Online Panel. For each country, quotas were set according to age, gender and region. The ages of adults interviewed for each country were as follows: Great Britain and France (adults aged 16-75), Germany and Italy (adults aged 16-70), Spain and Sweden (adults aged 16-65), Hungary and Poland (adults aged 16-60), Portugal (adults aged 18-55) and Greece (adults aged 18-50).

Weighting

Across all countries data are weighted by age, gender, region and working status to the known offline population profile. For some countries, additional weighting criteria are included. Data for Great Britain are also weighted by social grade (using the NRS social grade classification system), while data for Germany are weighted by household size.

Data Quality

To ensure a quality sample, rules are in place to limit the number of surveys provided to each participant, which helps reduce the bias of multiple surveys. Procedures are also in place to remove panellists who are inactive or whose behaviour history is suspicious. During the survey data quality is ensured by flagging and removing participants' answers that are suspicious by validating geo-IPs and identifying any speeders or straight liners.

No cash incentives are provided for completing the surveys. Panellists do, however, earn points according to the survey length. When panellists accumulate enough points they can order different shopping vouchers from the dedicated website.

The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the international quality standard for market research, ISO 20252:2006, as well as ISO 9001:2008, the international general company standard with a focus on continual improvement through quality management systems and ISO 27001:2005, the international standard for information security. Further, Ipsos MORI is required to comply with the UK Data Protection Act, which covers the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy.

Furthermore, all online research carried out by Ipsos MORI is done so in accordance with ESOMAR guidelines relating to online research (for more information, please see here: <https://www.ipsos-mori.com/Assets/Docs/Techniques/ESOMAR-28-Questions.pdf>)



DETAILED FINDINGS

The European Advertising Consumer Research Report 2014 was commissioned by TRUSTe and the EDAA, to provide a clear set of benchmark data by which the ongoing progress of the EU Self-Regulatory Programme for OBA could be evaluated.

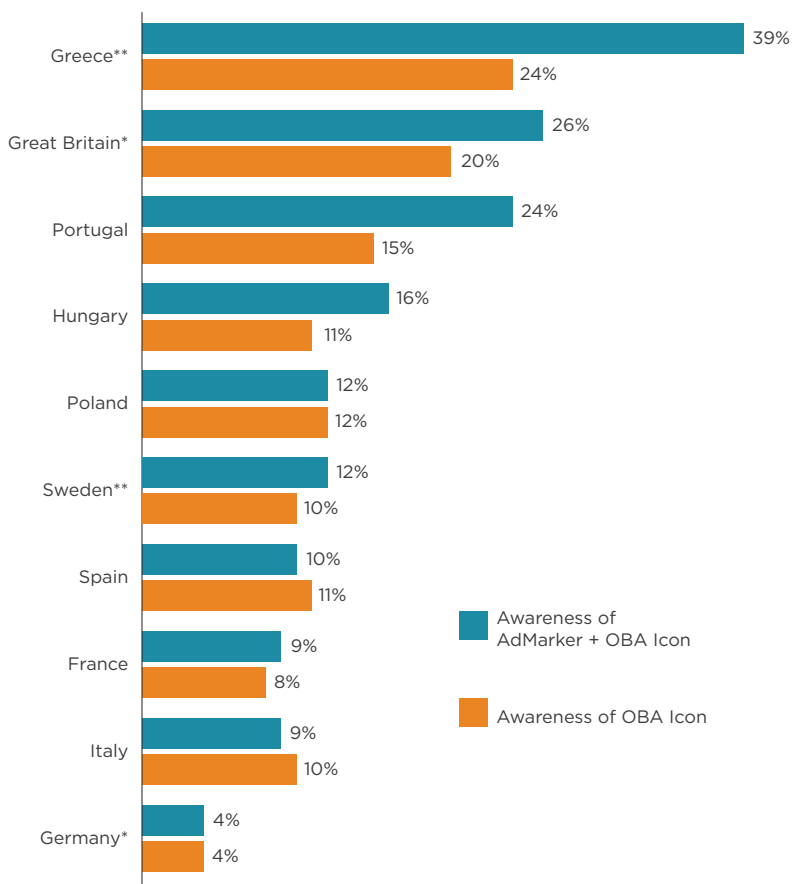
Completed in the second year of the Programme, the questions were designed to measure consumer attitudes and perceptions of the Self-Regulatory Programme and establish recognition and understanding of the OBA Icon and the YourOnlineChoices website.

1.1 Awareness and Understanding of the OBA Icon

Consumers were asked whether, before today, they had seen either the OBA Icon or the OBA Icon accompanied by the Admarker text. The UK version is shown below although the localised version was shown for the different European markets in which the research was conducted. The order of the two options was rotated within the questionnaire.

1. AdChoices 
2. 

The table below shows the percentage of consumers who spontaneously recognised the OBA Icon. The countries are listed in order of those who had seen the OBA Icon + Admarker with the comparable percentage of OBA Icon awareness listed alongside.



* Countries that have conducted a consumer awareness campaign in 2013
 ** Countries that have conducted a consumer awareness campaign in 2014

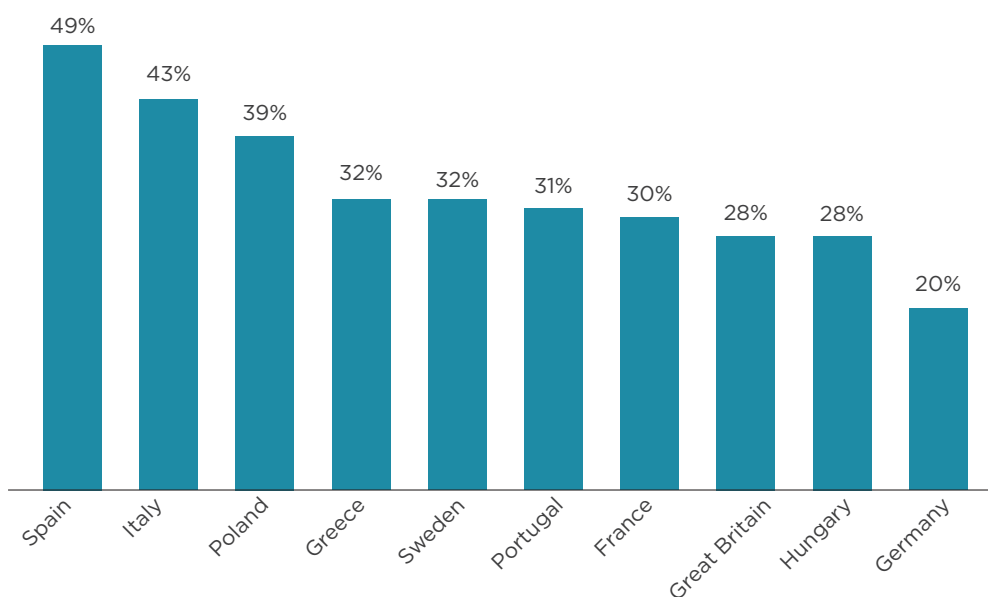
The recent consumer awareness campaign in Greece from August through to September is the likely reason why Greece currently has the highest levels of awareness of the AdMarker text (39%) and the OBA Icon (24%) across all the European markets where the research was conducted.


Great Britain is the only country for which tracking data exists and here awareness has doubled over the last two years rising from 13% in 2012 to 22% in 2013 and now 26% in 2014 showing a steady upward trend. Consumer awareness campaigns were conducted in Great Britain and Germany in the summer of 2013 and the lower levels of awareness here than in Greece, could be attributable to the size of the market.

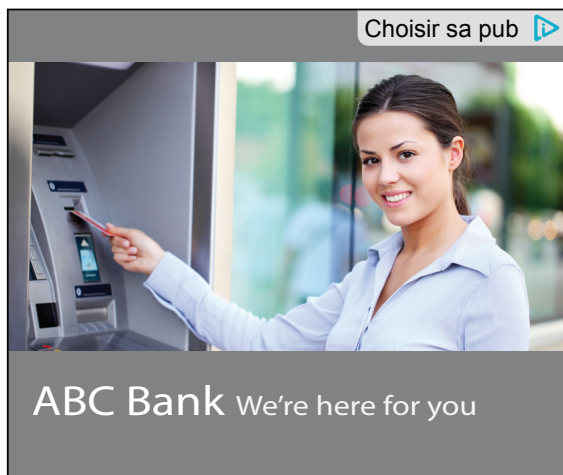
Across four countries surveyed (Great Britain, Greece, Portugal, Hungary) the recognition is significantly greater when the OBA Icon is accompanied by the Admarker text e.g. "AdChoices"

Respondents that recognised the OBA Icon were then asked if they had ever clicked on the Icon. 1 in 3 consumers in Sweden and Greece who are familiar with the Icon had clicked on it rising to around half of consumers in Spain. Further details in the table below:

Have you ever clicked on the OBA icon?



All respondents were then shown a sample advert and asked which of the following responses they thought best described what they thought the  meant. (French version shown - localised for all European markets)



1. The logo of the brand being advertised
2. Click to see a video
3. Click to manage your privacy preferences
4. This is a safe advert
5. Click to visit the brand's website
6. Click to exit the advert
7. Other
8. Don't know

Spain tops the list of countries where the meaning of the icon is best understood, followed by Great Britain, France and Germany with respondents in all of these countries choosing 'manage privacy preferences' in their top two responses. This may also be a positive legacy of consumer awareness campaigns from 2013.

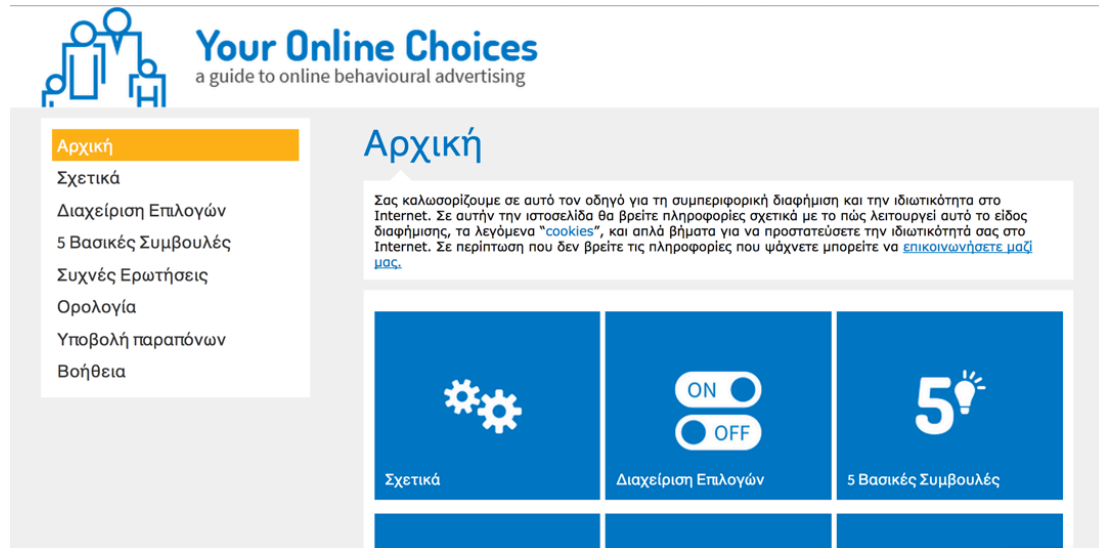
	% that though the OBA Icon allowed them to manage their privacy preferences	Where this ranked in list of responses ranging from 1-5
Spain	28%	#1
Great Britian	21%	#1
Germany	21%	#2
France	17%	#2
Sweden	13%	#5
Portugal	12%	#4
Italy	11%	#5
Greece	8%	#5
Poland	8%	#4 (joint)
Hungary	7%	#5 (joint)

The remaining countries show that while awareness of the Icon may have received a considerable boost recently in countries such as Greece there is still more to be done to increase understanding of its purpose.

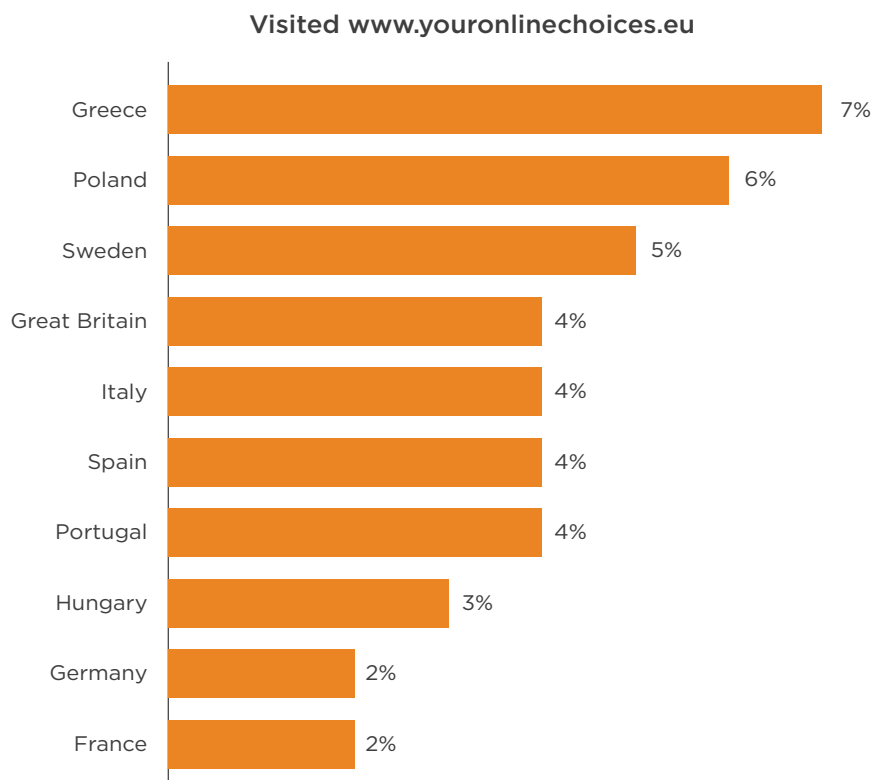
1.2 Awareness and Understanding of YourOnlineChoices.eu

To close the circle for consumers, companies involved in the collection and use of data for OBA purposes must integrate onto the “Consumer Choice Platform” at www.youronlinechoices.eu (YOC), providing consumers with the option to ‘turn off’ (or turn back on) this data collection and use by some or all participating companies. This consumer choice and control is a core component of the Self-Regulatory Programme.

Consumers were asked whether they had ever visited the website www.youronlinechoices.eu (Greece version shown – fully localised for European markets)



The table below shows the percentage of consumers who had visited the website:



Apart from Greece, where there is likely to be an increase in awareness due to the recent consumer awareness campaign these results show fairly consistent use of the www.youronlinechoices.eu website across European markets. 1 in 25 consumers aged between 18–50 in the ten markets surveyed say that they have visited the website.

To gain further insight into the site’s effectiveness, all of those respondents who said that they have visited the site were asked what they thought best described its purpose from the following options:

1. It provides information about Online Behavioural Advertising
2. It provides instructions to visitors to manage their Online Behavioural Advertising preferences
(For example, turn it on or off)
3. It enables visitors to complain about Online Behavioural Advertising
4. None of the above
5. Other

The results are shown in the table below. It is important to note that the sample size is very small for individual countries. Across the ten countries, the majority (57%) of 18-50 year olds who report they have visited www.youronlinechoices.eu correctly believe its primary purpose is to provide instructions to manage their advertising preferences.

	Manage OBA Preferences	Information about OBA	Complain about OBA
Greece	73%	38%	22%
Great Britain	65%	44%	20%
Spain	65%	52%	41%
Hungary	64%	52%	18%
France	57%	28%	28%
Italy	54%	33%	34%
Germany	51%	71%	34%
Poland	51%	33%	26%
Portugal	46%	44%	27%
Sweden	41%	46%	38%

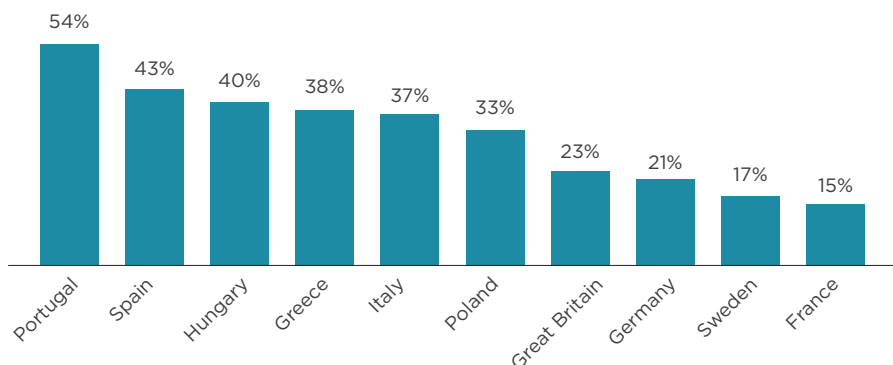
1.3 Impact of EU Self Regulatory Programme on Attitudes to OBA

After a brief explanation of the concept of Online Behavioural Advertising (OBA) respondents were shown two images to explain what happens when they click on the OBA Icon. (Polish version shown – fully localised for European markets).



They were then asked to what extent having this information available to them, along with the option of managing their privacy preferences; made them more or less favourable about the concept of Online Behavioural Advertising.

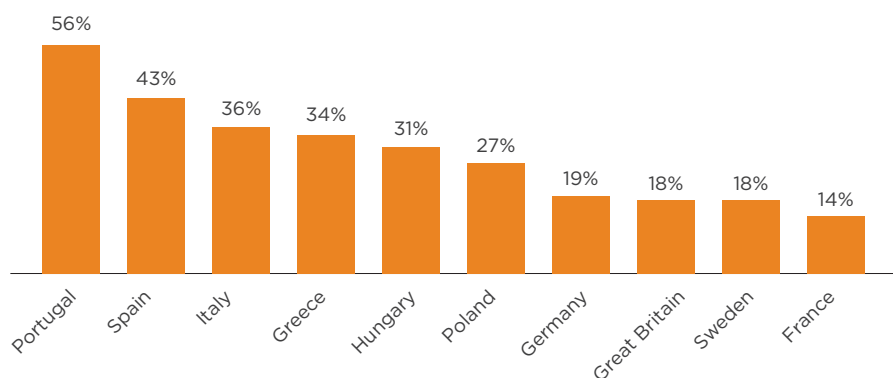
Potentially more favourable towards OBA



The Programme has the potential for a positive impact in some countries such as Portugal (54%) and Spain (43%). The impact was less in Western European countries (Great Britain, Germany and France).

Respondents were then asked what impact the option of managing their privacy preferences had on their levels of trust in the brand being advertised.

Potential increase in trust towards brand being advertised



Responses appear divided along geographic lines with Southern European countries - Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece seeing the greatest potential increase in trust for advertisers through the EU Self-Regulatory Programme; followed by Eastern European countries (Hungary and Poland) and then Western European countries (Germany, Great Britain and France).

CONCLUSION

The European Advertising Consumer Research Report is the first of its kind to measure consumer recognition and perceptions of the European Self-Regulatory Programme on OBA across a wide range of European markets. As such, it provides an ideal benchmark for subsequent studies, through which future progress may be assessed.

The EDAA and TRUSTe consider the results of the study point to the following conclusions:

EDAA Consumer Awareness Campaign has significant impact and value.

Prior to the research being conducted, Greece was the latest national market to launch the EDAA Consumer Awareness Campaign. The results indicate that this kind of awareness campaign can indeed generate significant impact and value. Greece not only shows the highest level of recognition of the OBA Icon from all markets surveyed, yet also shows the highest percentage of consumers visiting the YourOnlineChoices website and the highest level of understanding of this website. This shows the immediate impact of the awareness campaign and the link between a campaign and its potential for consumer empowerment.

Pan-European recognition of the initiative is good, and keeps growing.

The results show an encouraging level of recognition of the core tools at the heart of the EU Self-Regulatory Programme on OBA. In Great Britain the results show that recognition continues to steadily increase, despite the awareness campaign being conducted back in 2013. Overall the study highlights the importance of the OBA Icon's accompanying text, (e.g. "AdChoices" in the UK), with levels of recognition significantly increasing for four markets when consumers are served the explanatory text.

Consumers actively engage with the core pillars of transparency, choice and control.

Impressively, one in five consumers in Germany who have seen the OBA Icon say that they have clicked on it. This figure rises across the European markets surveyed with a peak in Spain, where up to one in two consumers said they had clicked on the OBA Icon. These initial results are a true achievement regarding active consumer engagement. The OBA Icon is not merely providing consumers with notice about OBA, consumers are proactively choosing to engage with this notice – it is clear, visible and contextual.

Consumers demonstrate, by and large, a good level of understanding of the initiative and the Your Online Choices website.

Overall, the majority (57%) of 18–50 where the research ran, accurately identified the primary purpose of the YourOnlineChoices website (i.e. manage the OBA preferences). Furthermore, an average of 1 in 25 consumers have visited the website which explains how OBA helps fund and maintain the free Internet they enjoy on a daily basis, and had the opportunity to make a meaningful choice over their behavioural advertising preferences. The high levels of consumer understanding indicate that the site is provided in a clear manner, aligned with EDAA's goals to provide relevant and meaningful consumer information.

Consumer attitudes and understanding differ by market.

The research indicates that awareness differs between markets of different sizes, where smaller markets can see higher initial levels of awareness. One potential explanation of this can be related to the more prominent role that major websites play in smaller markets. When the OBA Icon is displayed on prominent local websites, internet users gain knowledge of the Programme more rapidly than in bigger markets where major websites come in larger numbers, which can slow consumer reach. Similarly in smaller markets, where more Internet users saw and clicked on the Icon, there is a potential increase in favourability towards behavioural advertising (e.g. 54% in Portugal, 40% in Hungary, 38% in Greece), highlighting that when Internet users visit the YourOnlineChoices website by clicking on the OBA Icon, they actively gain knowledge on the online ad ecosystem and understand how they have a part to play.

Investment in the EU Self-Regulatory Programme can have significant benefits for businesses.

This research shows that consumers are engaged and empowered by the EU Self-Regulatory Programme on Online Behavioural Advertising. Companies need to provide consumers with relevant and meaningful transparency, choice and control and the European OBA Self-Regulatory Programme offers companies with the ideal approach and tools to do-so. These are built around credible compliance and enforcement processes, which are administered independently. With over 130 companies already licenced with the EDAA to offer the OBA Icon and YourOnlineChoices integration, the benefits of early adoption are key. The research indicates this, with the potential for consumers to be more favourable to OBA when provided with the information and choice offered through the Programme (as shown with 54% in Portugal). Similar results were also shown when consumers were asked about the increase in trust towards the brand being advertising. This demonstrates why brands have a vital role in the Programme, through working with compliant business partners. Those companies with the vision to provide effective consumer controls will reap the rewards.

Overall summary of conclusions.

The conclusions available from this first European Advertising Consumer Research Report demonstrate that the EU Self-Regulatory Programme on OBA is already a vibrant and meaningful solution for both consumers and business. However, there is always room for improvement, especially with regard to consumer awareness, recognition and understanding. All relevant actors in the European online advertising industry should take a shared interest and look to ensure high uptake and compliance as the Programme further develops across 2015 and continues to grow in reach, awareness and traction.

ABOUT TRUSTE

TRUSTe is the leading global Data Privacy Management (DPM) company and powers trust in the data economy by enabling businesses to safely collect and use customer data across their customer, employee, and vendor channels. Our SaaS-based DPM Platform gives users control over all phases of data privacy management from conducting assessments and implementing compliance controls to managing ongoing monitoring. Our DPM Services, including assessments and certifications, are delivered by an expert team of privacy professionals. Thousands of companies worldwide rely on TRUSTe to minimize compliance risk and protect their brand. See <http://www.truste.com>

ABOUT THE EDAA

The European Interactive Digital Advertising Alliance (EDAA) is a non-profit organisation based in Brussels and is responsible for enacting key aspects of the self-regulatory initiative for Online Behavioural Advertising (OBA) across Europe. EDAA principally acts as the central licensing body for the OBA Icon and provides technical means for consumers to exercise transparency and control over OBA through the youronlinechoices.eu online consumer choice platform. EDAA is governed by EU-level organisations which make up the value chain of OBA within Europe and acts to ensure European consistency in approach. More information can be found at www.edaa.eu