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## **With Online Media (Including Darienite.com) If You're Not Paying, You're the Product**

**Author :** David Gurliacci

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Darienite.com sells your attention to advertisers. We may start using Twitter ads in our Twitter feeds, and then Twitter may collect information on you. Google and most other search engines collect information on you. Cookies on websites track you, even after you leave the website.

This is all done so that advertisers will know where they can target ads. Most of us know by now that it's a part of modern Internet life. Sometimes it comes to light that a number of companies, including some big ones, go beyond the minor invasions of privacy.

(Darienite.com itself doesn't track your Internet use, even on our website — and if any of the services we use actually track you, we don't know it, see no reason to watch that, and don't intend to. We think MailChimp may know if you opened our newsletter. We don't look at that.)

Youtube, a part of Google, has had a different attitude. Here's what the Federal Trade Commission's Consumer Information blog says about [a recent fine Youtube paid](#) for **tracking and targeting kids** who watch children's videos on that website:

- Editor's note: By the way, here's a post from 2012 with a caveat [about the phrase in our headline](#).

*By Lisa Weintraub Schifferle*  
*Attorney, FTC, Division of Consumer & Business Education*

Does your child love YouTube videos? Did you know that while little Susie was watching her favorite shows, YouTube was collecting data and using it to send her targeted ads? Under a [settlement with the FTC](#), YouTube and its parent company, Google, must pay a record \$170 million for violating the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) Rule.

COPPA is intended to give parents control over the online collection of their young children's personal information. If you have a child under 13, websites and online services covered by COPPA must tell you about their data collection practices and get your permission before collecting information from your child.

The FTC's complaint alleges that YouTube did not properly notify parents and get their consent before collecting and using their children's personal information.

Specifically, YouTube collected "persistent identifiers" — such as cookies that are used to track viewers over time and across websites — for advertising to children. For example, a toy company with a YouTube channel could set its account so that a child who visited its channel received ads for the company's toys when the child visited another website.

Such use of persistent identifiers to track children on child-directed websites without parental consent violates COPPA.

Besides paying \$34 million to the state of New York and a record-setting \$136 million COPPA penalty — which goes to the U.S. Treasury — YouTube must create a system for the channels on its platform to identify their child-directed content. Once the order has been implemented, viewers of that content will no longer be tracked for advertising purposes.

The settlement also requires YouTube to provide COPPA training to employees responsible for managing YouTube channels. And YouTube must comply with the rest of [COPPA's requirements](#).

Keep in mind that the commission's complaint alleges that YouTube collected personal information from users of the main YouTube service. The case does not involve the YouTube Kids app, which does not track kids for advertising purposes.

For help talking with your kids about online safety, check out [Net Cetera: Chatting with Kids About Being Online](#). To learn more about your COPPA rights, read the FTC's [Protecting Your Child's Privacy Online](#). And, if you think a company may have violated your COPPA rights, report it at [ftc.gov/complaint](https://ftc.gov/complaint).