

Global Privacy Control initiative seeks to give users control over their Internet privacy wishes

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An ensemble of activist groups, tech companies and publishers has banded together to start a new initiative aimed at giving internet users more control over the way their data is used. The group has named the new initiative Global Privacy Control (GPC), and has announced its launch on their web page.

A decade ago, several entities in the tech and privacy sector proposed a feature for [web browsers](#) called Do Not Track. It was supposed to force websites to stop tracking user internet activities (which allows for creating targeted ads). Several browser companies implemented the feature, but it never caught on, mainly because website owners ignored it. That, proponents of the new initiative claim, was because they were not legally forced to do so. But that might be changing. Recently, the state of California passed legislation called the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA), which gives users in that state the right to demand that their data not be used unless they

give their permission. Some European countries have passed similar legislation.

The new GPC initiative is backed and run by a diverse group, including the *Washington Post*, the Mozilla Foundation, and professors at Georgetown Law School. It is also still in its infancy, so the particulars of how users might go about exerting their possible new rights are still being worked out. On its website, the GPC group suggests that rather than set up a single feature, as was the case with Do Not Track, users should have multiple options. They can cease using Google or Microsoft Edge, for example, and switch to Mozilla or other browsers that offer privacy options. Or they can download and install browser add-ons.

Members of the GPC initiative are also working to pressure more states (and the federal government) to enact legislation similar to what is being done in California. For that to work, though, they will need broad support from the user and technology community. But for now, users who live in California can take advantage of the [privacy](#) tools now available and to start asking websites to stop tracking them—and if such sites refuse or ignore them, they can take legal action.

More information: Global Privacy Control: globalprivacycontrol.org/

Announcing Global Privacy Control: Making it Easy for Consumers to Exercise Their Privacy Rights: globalprivacycontrol.org/press-release/20201007.html

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