

DuckDuckGo can now block the Google Chrome tracking method, FLoC

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DuckDuckGo. Credit: Unsplash

In an attempt to better track users and predict their search habits, Google Chrome has developed FLoC (Federated Learning of Cohorts). FLoC provides visibility into user data to any website that desires this

information.

In fact, FLoC places each user in an ID group to help websites recognize and target individuals. In response, the alternative search engine DuckDuckGo has come out with an [extension](#) for Chrome that can block FLoC tracking. Furthermore, users now have the option of using either the DuckDuckGo application or extension to entirely opt out of FLoC monitoring.

Google first implemented FLoC in order to offer all users advertisements based on their demographic and search trends, but without including third-party cookies. However, the [company](#) waited only a short time before deciding the tracking method would apply to all Google Chrome users regardless of whether the user chose to opt in or not. Understandably concerned about privacy, many users have expressed wanting to learn more about alternative search engine options.

Users can avoid the stealthy automatic inclusion in FLoC by either simply avoiding Google Chrome altogether, installing the DuckDuckGo Chrome extension or changing their settings in Google and/or Chrome.

Basically, FLoC is the search tracking response to the decision of many browser vendors to cease the use of third-party cookies due to concerns over user privacy. Luckily, at least at this time, no other browser vendor aside from Google Chrome has shown intent to use FLoC. Other search engine options might include Mozilla Firefox or Safari.

In terms of the new DuckDuckGo Chrome extension, this add-on automatically blocks FLoC activity on any website in order to enhance user privacy. Best of all, this extension can even auto-update, ensuring the user remains secure while browsing. Just to stay up to date, though, users should periodically check which version of the extension they currently have installed.

In the meantime, for users who choose to still use Chrome, they can help safeguard their privacy by disabling Ad Personalization in Google Ad Settings, disable Web & App Activity or Include Chrome history and activity from sites, apps and devices that use Google services; and remain logged out of your Google account in order to avoid syncing data history with Chrome if not using a sync passphrase.

That said, users who choose to install the DuckDuckGo extension just to be on the safe side will have the option of Global Privacy Control, Smarter Encryption, private [search](#) and tracker blocking.

More information: "Use DuckDuckGo Extension to Block FLoC, Google's New Tracking Method in Chrome." Spread Privacy, Spread Privacy, 9 Apr. 2021, spreadprivacy.com/block-floc-with-duckduckgo/

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