

Google's Invite Media partners with opt-in data provider VisualDNA

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Google's dynamic buying platform Invite Media has teamed up with user-profiling tool VisualDNA to let buyers target users via opt-in data.

The tie-up will see Invite Media integrate VisualDNA data, bolstering targeting capabilities around more than 120 categories covering interests, tastes, preferences, intents and bespoke brand segments.

While Invite Media already works with third-party data providers, such as Bluekai and Exelate, the difference with VisualDNA is that the data is obtained on an opt-in basis, with users informed (to some extent) of what their data is being used for after taking part in a personality quiz.

The use of such data could be seen as a way of meeting compliance with the revised ePrivacy Directive, which came into effect across Europe at the end of May. It will be enforced in the UK in a year's time, when technical solutions have been developed.

The LA Times and Trinity Mirror have both been using VisualDNA as a profile and targeting tool for over a year.

Trinity Mirror's head of digital product and marketing director Paul Hood previously told **new media age** that using VisualDNA to profile and segment audiences means there are fewer privacy concerns because people are choosing to take the test ([nma 5 August 2010](#)).

"They have the option to opt out, but generally they've indicated that they're happy to have more targeted ads served to them," he said. "We're not just taking cookie-based information from them."

Matt Kelly, digital publisher of nationals at Trinity Mirror, also told **new media age** that VisualDNA data was a shift beyond targeting based on user numbers, and reliance on reporting inflated numbers of disloyal website users, labelling chasing audiences as "editorial prostitution" ([nma 10 June 2010](#)).

Alex Willcock, co-founder of VisualDNA, explained that its data is built up of many different layers, gleaned from their own sources, and partnerships with publishers, such as Trinity Mirror.

"There's a real lack of quality data in the UK market," he said. "Different clients have different rules on data partnerships. Sky, for instance, has a total lockdown. But others, like Trinity Mirror, are happy for us to use it in a third-party context. We have different arrangements with different clients and publishers."

Earlier this year, **new media age** revealed that publishers were moving to crack down on third-party data providers helping themselves to user data, without publishers' permission, after the Association of Online Publishers found evidence of consumer behaviour being tracked without the knowledge of publishers ([nma 24 March 2011](#)).

The AOP was investigating accusations that third parties have been dropping tags onto publishers' sites without permission and using the resulting collated data of premium audiences to increase the value of their own media sales. On one publisher's site, the AOP found 90 unidentified tags.