

# Creepy targeted ads on your phone will disappear after you change one setting

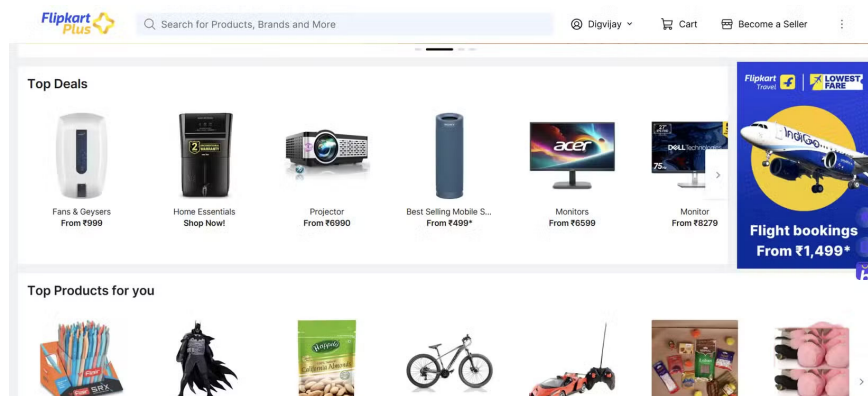
Hidden in the privacy menu is a toggle for ad tracking. Some people have tried turning it off to see if it makes a difference. It's a small change, but it makes the phone much more user-friendly.

Mobile advertising is becoming too personal. You might search for headphones once and then see them everywhere, from YouTube to random free games. Even after you stop shopping, the same product continues to track you.

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## When mobile ads become digital stalkers

### How a search turns into a never-ending ad



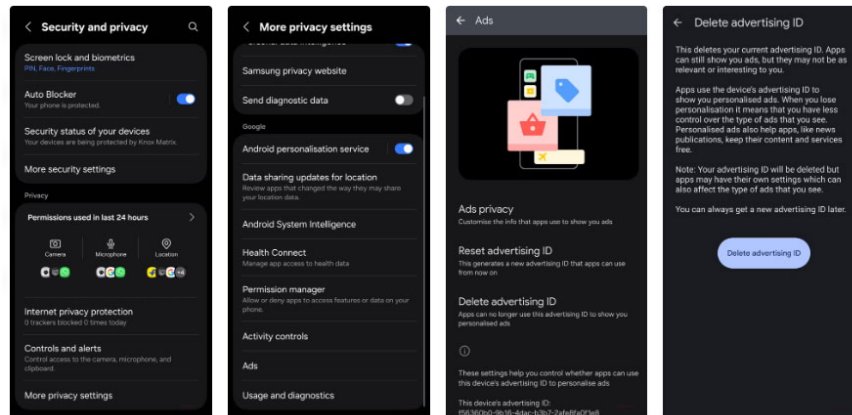
Targeted ads are meant to show you products you might like. But the way they appear across different apps on your phone feels more like tracking. The same pattern repeats throughout a typical week.

The timing is most notable. Ads appear within hours and return for days with new discounts and urgent promotions. Such regularity is unlikely to be coincidental. An ad network may have linked your recent actions to your device identifier and serve relevant ads when connected apps request them.

So how can a search track you to other apps? When an app requests an ad, it may include a persistent device identifier if available. Ad networks can check recent actions associated with that identifier and show relevant ads. Since many apps use the same ad network, a single action can quickly spread to many apps.

## The hidden switch that advertising companies don't want you to touch

### Hidden Android setting that helps circumvent tracking



The setting that disables ad tracking on your Android phone isn't advertised. It's several layers deep, uses plain language, and isn't highlighted during setup, so it's easy to miss. Since personalized ads typically make more money than generic ads, ad platforms like to keep this setting enabled.

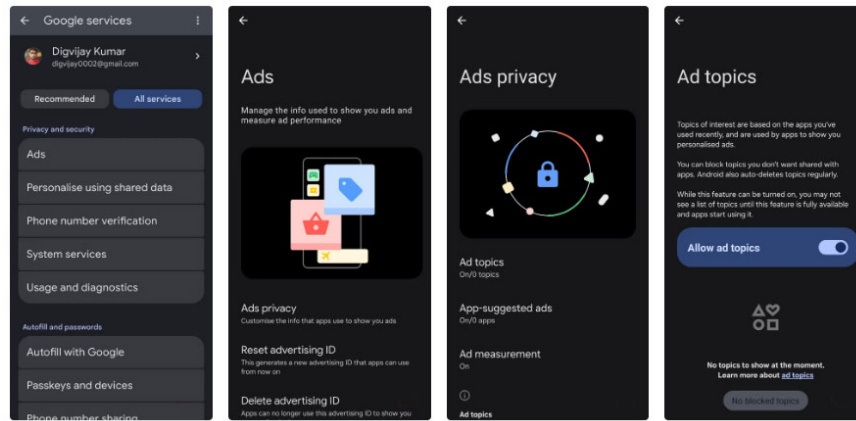
1. First, open **Settings** .
2. Scroll to **Security and privacy** and open it.
3. At the bottom, tap **More privacy settings** .
4. Select **Ads** , then click **Delete advertising ID** and confirm.

**Note** : The path is similar on many Android devices, although the label may be different.

Deleting it cuts off one of the main ways ad networks can identify your device across apps, which often makes it a better choice if your goal is to reduce cross-app tracking. In the same menu, you can also reset your Advertising ID. This replaces the old ID with a new one, like changing your license plate number instead of deleting it. Old data associated with the previous ID will be less likely to be linked to you, but new activity can still be associated with the new ID.

## What happens after deleting the advertising ID?

**Ads remain, but privacy advantages are lost**



After you remove cross-app linking, nothing on your phone is disrupted. Apps still run, games still load, and ads continue to appear. The difference is evident in the content of those ads. Ads often stop reflecting your most recent searches because without an Advertising ID, ad networks can't easily link your app activity into a persistent profile.

On many Android phones today, the ad privacy dashboard is built into the settings, although the labels may vary by device. Open **Settings -> Google -> Ads -> Ads privacy** . If **All services** appears, open that first. Here, you can turn off **Ad topics** , **App-suggested ads** , and **Ad measurement to limit ad signals on your device**. **Combining these controls with changes to your Google account will reduce the data available for ad personalization across Google apps and services** .

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