



**DATA PRIVACY IN MOBILE GAMES:  
WHY CONSENTING USERS  
MONETIZE BETTER**

 **USERCENTRICS**

# MOBILE GAMES ARE BOOMING, BUT DATA PRIVACY IS CREATING CHALLENGES (NUMBERS IN RED ON IOS, LOW ATT OPT-IN RATES, TOUGH COMPETITION FOR USER ENGAGEMENT).

Here's the thing: users' consent to data sharing is actually a great opportunity hidden in plain sight. Users clearly want a choice and if you ask them in the right way, many will say yes. Apple's ATT was first, android will follow in a few years. increasingly, premium brands and ad networks insist on using only compliant data, effectively pushing the industry towards consent-based marketing. Consent is key. So, to futureproof monetization strategies for in-app advertising (iaa), Mobile Game publishers and developers need to embrace privacy and get smart about compliance. At the end of this report, we demonstrate how collecting consent positively impacts the bottomline of a game (e.g. increasing Average Revenue Per User), plus best practices on how to obtain consent, optimize opt-in rates and monetize compliance.

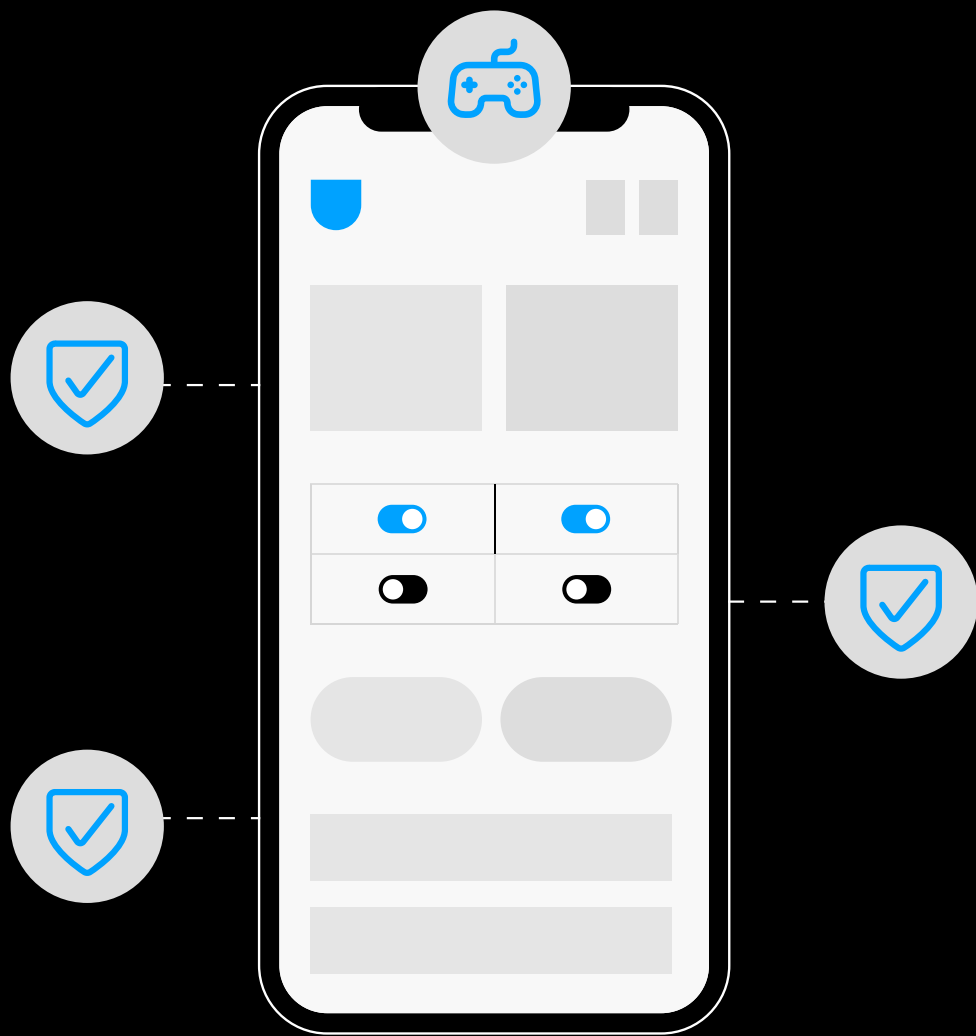
**Gustavo Burnier,**  
Chief Marketing Officer at Usercentrics.

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FIRST PART

LEVEL UP: CONSENT-BASED  
MARKETING IN MOBILE GAMES



# HOW DATA PRIVACY IS CHANGING THE MOBILE GAMING MARKET

Mobile Games are more popular than ever before. People use apps and play games on their mobile devices more now than before the pandemic, on average **four to five hours every day**.

Data privacy is also a hot topic among consumers.

**Compliant data (personal data + consent) is the most valuable asset for forward-looking app companies, as the data clearly shows:**

**40%**

of users will delete an app if they have data privacy concerns about it. (KPMG Advisory)

**66%**

of consumers have said they would stop supporting a company if their data was breached or shared without permission. (Adobe)

**80%**

of respondents say they're more likely to purchase from companies they believe protect clients' personal data. (Cisco report)

**84%**

of consumers are more likely to be loyal to a company if they have strong data security controls. (Salesforce Research)

**100%**

increase in users' willingness to share personal data if they trust a brand. (UK Data & Marketing Association)

To sum it up, **people are playing more Mobile Games and people want a choice about consent** before a Mobile Game starts collecting their personal data.

# MOBILE GAME INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS (APPS FLYER REPORT)



Total global annual Mobile Game ad spend in 2021 was **US \$14.5 billion**.



**10% increase** in in-app purchase (IAP) revenue on Android in 2021 vs 35% decrease on iOS in 2022.



**22% increase** in the number of total Mobile Game installs on Android from 2020 to 2021 vs. 6% decrease on iOS in the same period (also an effect of Apple's ATT).



**68%** of Mobile Games have implemented Apple's ATT.



**55% increase** in in-app advertising (IAA) on Android vs **2% decrease** on iOS (post-introduction of Apple's ATT).



**13% YoY drop** on iOS vs a 35% surge on Android in 2021.

## What's going on?

The entire industry is shifting ground. Google launched Consent Mode and is getting rid of third-party cookies, the EU's data protection authorities are strengthening their GDPR enforcement (with **France's CNIL looking closely at apps in 2023**), and an enforcement crackdown on mobile apps was **recently announced** by California's attorney general.

Google has **already launched beta testing** on their Privacy Sandbox on Android, so whatever difference publishers and advertisers are experiencing between iOS and Android today will even out as the entire industry moves towards consent.

**In 2021, Mobile Games had an ATT opt-in rate of around 31%**, compared to a 42% opt-in rate of non-gaming apps. In addition, users uninstall more Mobile Games than any other type of app on their mobile devices.

**It all comes down to trust — and smart consent design.**

Gamers often try out new games without paying much attention to the brand behind them. Once downloaded, gamers want to play and not spend a lot of time navigating through complex compliance jargon and too much setup.

In short, **Mobile Game Developers need to be smart about how they engage users for consent on their apps.**



**“Effective management of consent has become critical and can make a substantial difference in the success of a Mobile Game. Data privacy is becoming a must, and obtaining user consent is a decisive factor that can truly transform any game strategy.”**

**Valerio Sudrio,**  
Global Director of Apps Solutions



## **WHY CONSENT IS A BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY FOR MOBILE GAMES PUBLISHERS. A “NEW NORMAL” IS EMERGING IN THE APP MARKET.**

Mobile Games publishers are pouring more money into user acquisition (UA) than ever before. However, they are also seeing a **13% drop in YoY on iOS** compared to a 35% increase on Android.

Privacy and consent are the reasons behind these numbers.

**According to a 2023 Cisco study**, the average privacy spend for companies in 2022 was **US \$2.7 million** (a 125% increase over three years) while the estimated benefits of privacy rose to **US \$3.4 million** with a 36% of companies experiencing returns at least double on their investment.

In the same study, **79% of organizations say data privacy has positive impacts, with only 6% saying it has a negative impact.**

The cat is out of the bag: **consent sells.**

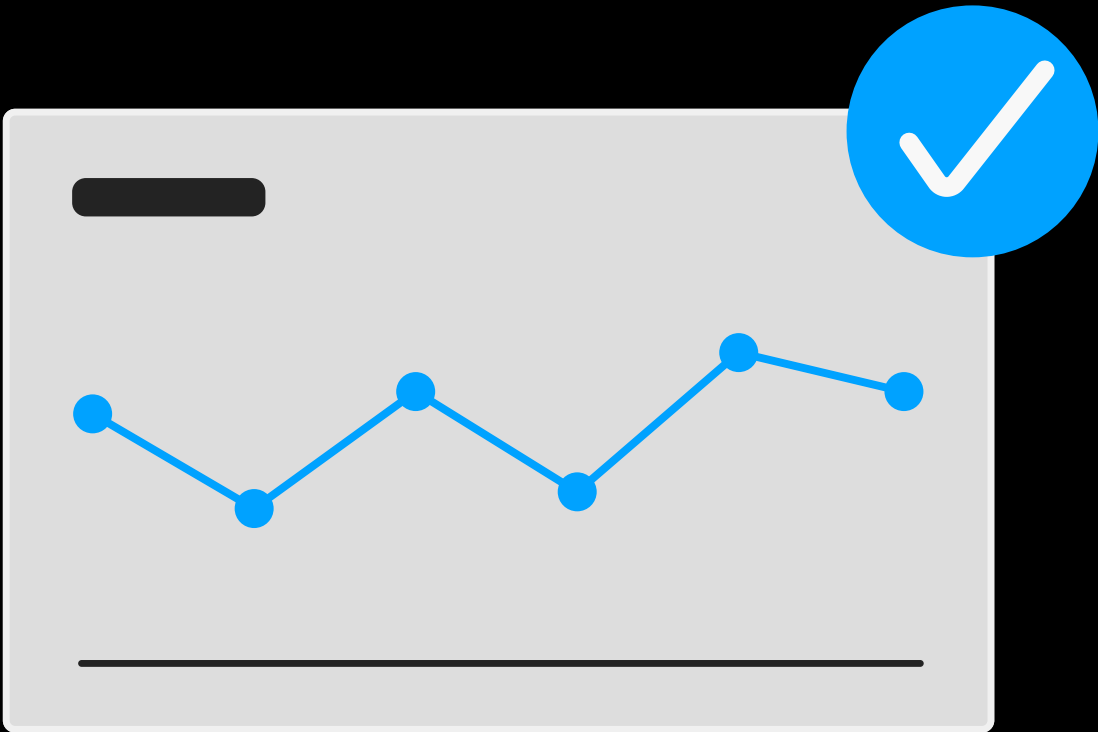
As digital advertising moves towards consent-based marketing, **Mobile Game developers and publishers can reap substantial benefits if they integrate smart consent management into their games:** increased monetization, premium brand trust, optimized opt-in rates and better contextual advertising.

However, the absence of user consent can mean:

- No permission to run remarketing or re-engagement campaigns.
- Installs often cannot be attributed accurately to a particular campaign.
- Increased user acquisition costs.
- No permission to utilize analytics, attribution, advertising, and other marketing tools or SDKs.

SECOND PART

RESULTS OF THE  
USERCENTRICS STUDY





# 90% OF GAMES ARE NOT COMPLIANT

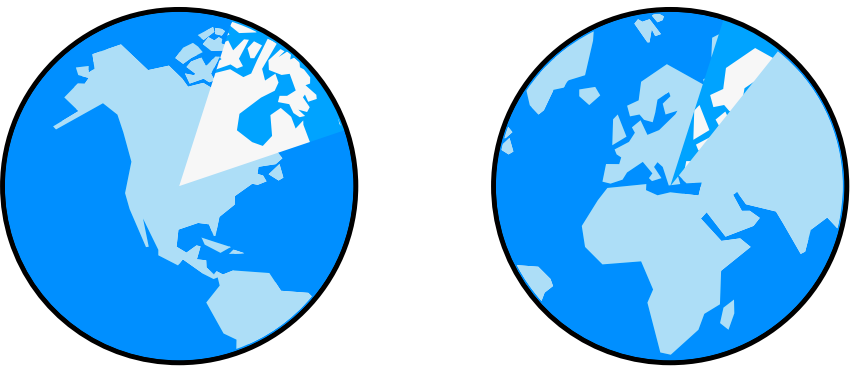
As the industry comes into greater awareness of the bouquet of benefits that follow from smart consent management, you would expect a different result. But in a recent study conducted by Usercentrics, it's clear that **the vast majority of Mobile Games have not yet caught on to the shift towards consent and compliance happening.**

In our study, **Usercentrics analyzed 269 Mobile Games** to see whether they offered users a choice of consent, as the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requires for any personal data processing.

Games analyzed met the following criteria:		
<b>Categories</b> All Games (Casual, Adventures, Action, Sport, Strategy, Racing)	<b>Stores</b> iOS / Android	<b>Usage</b> Avg DAU: over 150K

 **90% OF THE MOBILE GAMES ANALYZED DID NOT PROVIDE USERS WITH A CONSENT CHOICE, THEREBY FAILING COMPLIANCE WITH THE EU'S GDPR.**

If we look at different regions, **94% of Mobile Games in EMEA** (Europe, Middle East and Africa) failed compliance by not providing consent choices for players, with **87% in North America.**



**Are you taking advantage of user consent?**  
[Download our free step-by-step guide](#) to making your game compliant with the EU's GDPR and ePrivacy Directive.

# HOW MOBILE GAMES CAN USE CONSENT TO THEIR (AND THEIR PLAYERS') BENEFIT

Why are so many Mobile Games not giving their players a choice of consent? One good reason is that many app developers simply don't know how to implement consent in a smart and easy way, and some are still hesitant out of fear that it will negatively affect app revenue.

But as we've seen, smart consent management can have the opposite effect:

- Users want a choice, and if you ask them in the right way, many will reward you with both their trust and their data.
- Premium brands are increasingly attracted to publishers that have implemented consent management to ensure privacy compliance, increasing monetization through IAA.
- Trusting and consenting users also means better and more granular market and user insights, particularly insights into their consent decisions that will enable you to further refine your relationship to them, like tailoring user experiences.

**“At Usercentrics, we are proud to be able to demonstrate that obtaining consent is no longer solely a means of complying with regulations and avoiding penalties. Our success in improving ad revenue for Mobile Gaming apps by accurately conveying consent information to ad networks has shown that consent can be a significant driver of revenue growth.”**

**Valerio Sudrio,**  
Global Director of Apps Solutions

# PROGRAMMATIC ADVERTISING AND CONSENT

Programmatic advertising is one of the most popular and fastest-growing ways of doing digital marketing, with **US \$99 billion in programmatic ad spend in 2022**.

**Advertisers increasingly want to ensure that app publishers collect valid consent from users before purchasing traffic**, effectively pushing the whole app market towards consent-based marketing.

Many Supply-Side Platforms (SSPs) are especially keen on making sure that only consented data is collected as they work with Data Service Providers (DSPs) that have premium brands in their networks, who are themselves experiencing data privacy becoming a vital metric in their industry.

**It's simply too costly and too risky to ignore consent and compliance at this point:** laws keep coming, users care more, and the money will move to the futureproof strategies that can best capitalize on the reconfiguration of the internet towards data protection and stronger regulation.

Mobile Games have **some of the highest mobile user penetration**, with strong potential for **return-on-investment (ROI) from in-app programmatic ads (source)**.

In other words, privacy and consent is an integral part of the whole user experience.

In the US alone, an estimated 227 million people played video games in the last year. **In-app advertising (IAA)** is a way for game and app developers to reach millions of people from very diverse demographics.

In fact, **IAA** in Mobile Games has been proclaimed to be one of the biggest opportunities for advertisers going into 2023.

However, **IAA strategies must integrate user consent and monetize compliance** if they are to turn around the downward trend (at least with iOS) and ensure success for their publishers into the user-centric future.

THIRD PART

## CONSENT MARKETING IN ACTION: HOW HOMA GAMES ACHIEVED 1.5% ARPPDAU UPLIFT VIA USER CONSENT



 **USERCENTRICS**

# HOMA GAMES CASE STUDY

Homa Games is a game developer with over 80 games and 200 employees across 34 different nationalities in four locations. The company had the vision to build communities and technology that help game makers transform their ideas into games that billions are eager to download and play.

## PRODUCT AND CHALLENGE

One of Homa's most popular releases is Kaiju Run, with over 35 million downloads since launching in May 2021. The team at Homa Games were faced with the challenge of integrating consent in a way that would make them compliant and not lose user engagement at the same time. The goal was to make Kaiju Run compliant, easily adopt new regulations appearing in the future, and most importantly, unlock new monetization partners and inventory quality.



**35M +  
DOWNLOADS**



**2021  
LAUNCH DATA**



**4,7 / 5 RATING  
ON APP STORE**

## SOLUTION

To solve user consent issues, Homa Games decided to **integrate a consent management SDK** to enable consent from users and meet requirements from regulators. The team at Homa Games chose to work with the **Usercentrics Consent Management SDK**, a plug-and-play CMP solution designed to fix all complex compliance issues automatically, so app developers and publishers can continue thriving with data protection in mind.

## RESULTS

After integrating consent in Kaiju Run, **Homa Games was able to unlock ad networks inventory in regulated regions like Europe and California, bringing an ARPDAU 1.5% uplift on Ad Revenue.**



**1,5%  
ARPDAU UPLIFT**



**EU, CA  
REGIONS**



**\$0  
ADDITIONAL  
INVESTMENTS**

**“Usercentrics provides high-quality products, proven technology, and a top team willing to help, leading us to uplift our ARPPDAU within limited integration time and cost.”**

**Manel Simon,**  
Head of Mobile at Homa Games

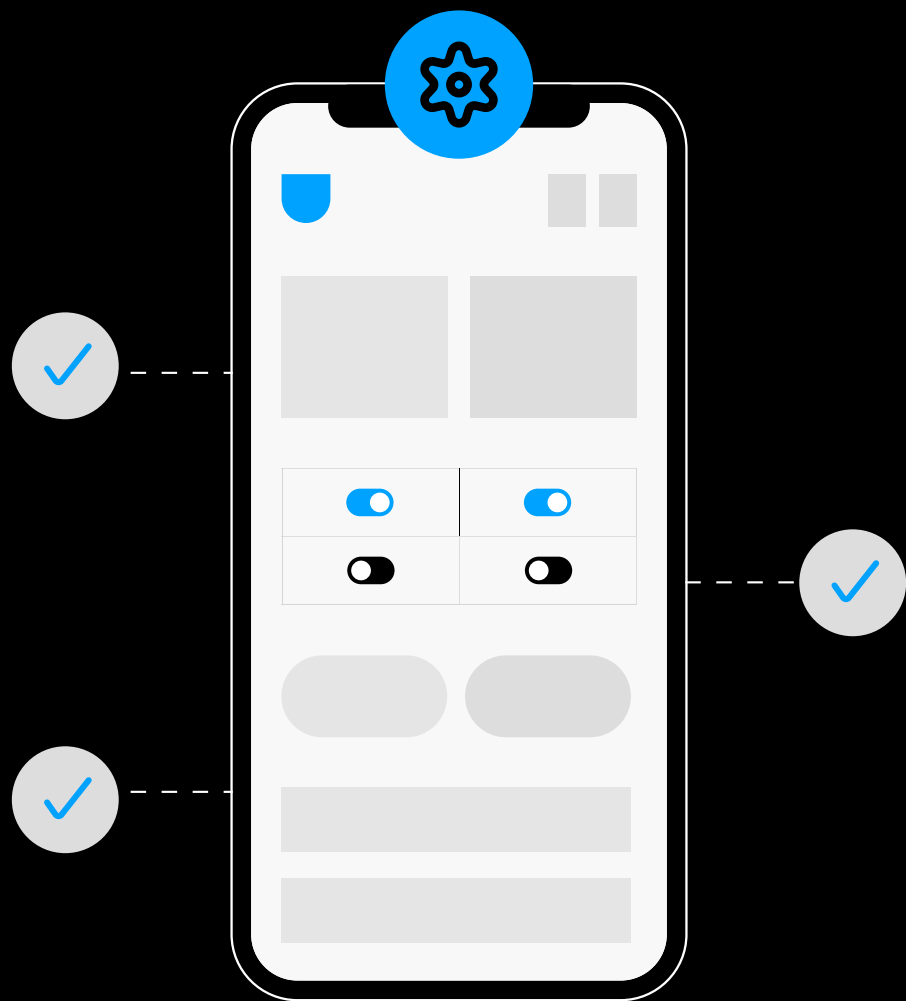
Seeing how smart consent yielded strong benefits, the team at Homa is now planning to implement our Consent Management SDK in more games in their portfolio to increase monetization and avoid privacy fines.

In addition to the direct benefits to ad revenue as a consequence of compliance, the team at Homa Games also got a better, more clear picture of their users and their consent decisions.

[Book a free demo](#)  
to experience the benefits  
of compliance with smart  
consent management!

FOURTH PART

# WHY USERCENTRICS CONSENT MANAGEMENT SDK?



# BENEFITS OF OUR UNITY SDK

The Usercentrics SDK is designed to solve the complexity of compliance so your game can continue thriving with data protection in mind.

With support for Unity, the Usercentrics SDK offers a flexible approach to solving data privacy compliance for Mobile Games, integrated in your game in less than an hour.

## 1 PLUG-AND-PLAY

Our SDK is designed to be ready out of the box. Integration and maintenance efforts are minimal. Just present the privacy banner when needed in your user flow, and we will take care of the rest.

## 2 DATA-DRIVEN OPTIMIZATION

Whether your priority is to maximize your monetization strategy or provide a personalized experience to your users, there is no doubt that you will need user insights. For this reason, optimizing your opt-in rates can make a vital business difference. The Usercentrics SDK provides analytics with different levels of granularity to track how changes to the banner influence your opt-in rates.

## 3 GEOTARGETING FOR GLOBAL COMPLIANCE

Thanks to our remote configuration setup and location awareness, the same SDK integration will solve your privacy compliance needs, regardless of whether your users are in Europe (GDPR), the US (CCPA/CPRA), Brazil (LGPD) or any other country with comprehensive data privacy regulations.

## 4 TAILOR-MADE FIT

We value great user experience, and for a CMP this means maximizing transparency while minimizing intrusiveness. In other words, we want users to have a seamless experience when using your app, and our SDK offers several levels of customization that will help you adapt our privacy banner to your design language, as well as enable advanced features such as Dark Mode and A/B Testing.

Protect and grow your Mobile Games business  
with Usercentrics Consent Management SDK.  
[GET FREE DEMO.](#)



APPENDIX



# METHODOLOGY

To conduct the research, Usercentrics used the “SDK intelligence insights” tool from Apptopia, a leading app competitive intelligence provider. 269 apps were selected in the category of Mobile Games that all have tracking technologies embedded, processing personal data from users via trackers contained in the SDKs.

For each category, a total of 269 apps were selected, all of which:

- Have third-party trackers installed for the purpose of analytics, attribution, monetization and/or marketing
- Have some users in the EU (so the GDPR applies)
- Have a minimum 150,000 daily active users (DAU)

The criteria were selected following the consent requirements in the GDPR and ePrivacy Directive and the way they have been interpreted and implemented by data protection authorities across the EU.

Each app was downloaded on devices inside the EU to check if a Consent Management Platform (CMP) was installed to enable us, as users, to reject the embedded tracking technologies and keep our personal data private. If the app had a consent banner installed, it was checked to see whether it complied with legal standards, i.e. did the consent banner offer “accept” and “decline” buttons, list all the tracking technologies in use on the app, and was the purpose of tracking described to the user.