

Title :Europe's New Online Privacy Rules Could Protect U.S. Users Too,

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AILSA CHANG, HOST:

While the laws are changing in Europe, digital norms are changing around the world. Many experts say people are coming to expect more transparency in terms of what data is collected about them and how it is used. Here's NPR's tech correspondent Aarti Shahani.

AARTI SHAHANI, BYLINE: Ahead of the change in European law set for May, there's a lot of forecasting going on. According to data privacy experts like Rayna Stamboliyska, who's based in Paris, the Internet is going to change in a big way. It's going to become a place where no means no.

RAYNA STAMBOLIYSKA: Before you even, you know, put your cookie on my computer or on my mobile device, you have to make sure I consent to being followed.

SHAHANI: A cookie is a small piece of data a website might slip into your smartphone or laptop to keep track of what you're doing online. Right now, without clearly asking your permission, she says, many sites are watching your every move. Under Europe's new directive, that's not OK. Consent must be given, and it can be taken away.

STAMBOLIYSKA: Consent, just like sexual consent, is dynamic.

SHAHANI: Stamboliyska gives this simple example. Say you want to buy a new pair of heels. You're fine with marketers slipping a Zappos ad into your morning feed. But then later you're done shopping.

STAMBOLIYSKA: Fine. If tomorrow I decide that I've had enough of shoes, I must have the ways to withdraw my consent and say, look; I'm fed up with your shoes. Now, just stop profiling me and stop following me. And please do remove the data you have of me because I no longer want you to keep it.