



# HOW MUMSNET APPROACHED “CONSENT OR PAY”



Mumsnet was conceived in early 2000 when Justine Roberts embarked on a disastrous family holiday. Her idea was to create a website where parents could swap advice about not just holidays but all the other stuff parents talk about. Twenty years later and Mumsnet is now the UK's biggest network for parents, with around 9 million unique visitors per month clocking up around 100 million page views. Mumsnet mission is to make parents' lives easier by pooling knowledge, advice and support.



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**Nino Stylianou**  
Head of Programmatic  
**Mumsnet**

## The 'Consent or Pay' Landscape

The user consent landscape has undergone significant changes following guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). In 2024, the ICO contacted the top 200 UK websites, a number that has since grown to the top 1,000, urging publishers to give equal prominence to both the 'Accept' and 'Reject All' options on first-layer consent banners. In response to concerns about the potential impact on advertising revenue, many UK publishers began exploring paywalls, with some going live in the summer.

The ICO recently introduced guidance on the "Consent or Pay" (CorP) model, focusing on balancing the need for businesses to monetise their content while respecting users' privacy rights. The guidance emphasises that consent must be freely given, informed, and easily revocable without negative consequences for the user. Additionally, cookie banners must be clear and unambiguous, with no default non-essential tracking and an easy way to withdraw consent.

## Why did Mumsnet choose 'Consent or Pay'?

Recognizing the ongoing changes in the consent landscape, Mumsnet decided to explore how the Consent or Pay model could fit their business needs while ensuring transparency and user control. In December 2023, they added a "Withdraw Consent" button to their first-layer consent banner, with the action set to "Accept legitimate interest only."

Although this wasn't a full "Reject All" option, it allowed Mumsnet to gather data on user preferences regarding reduced tracking alternatives. The move was also seen as a temporary measure while Mumsnet worked on a more comprehensive Consent or Pay strategy, both from a technical and commercial perspective.

## Crafting the 'Consent or Pay' message

Mumsnet took a considered, step-by-step approach to implement their Consent or Pay message. Their strategy was based on continuous testing and optimization to ensure the most effective user experience and consent outcomes.

## A/B Testing

Mumsnet experimented with multiple variations of their Consent or Pay messaging:

- Different placements for the “Accept” and “Reject & Subscribe” buttons (left vs. right).
- Button language, initially using terms like “Read for Free” and “Go Premium to Remove Ads.” This evolved into clearer options: “Accept” and “Reject & Subscribe”.

## Device-Level Targeting

Initially, they used the same message across both web and mobile but noticed that mobile consent rates were lower. To address this, they optimized the mobile message by reducing the size of the banner, text, and logo.

This adjustment resulted in a decrease in bounce rates and an increase in the accept rate on mobile. Ultimately, they launched mobile and desktop-specific banners to further optimize the user experience.

## Rollout Strategy

After several months of A/B testing with only a small percentage of new users seeing the Consent or Pay variations, Mumsnet rolled out the message to new users across desktop and mobile in the EEA, UK, and Switzerland. As expected, the bounce rate increased, the “Accept All” rate rose, and the “Reject All” rate decreased.

After two weeks, Mumsnet triggered a full re-consent, showing the new Consent or Pay message to all users, both new and existing, which further improved consent rates.

“Sourcepoint's expertise and technology in guiding publishers through consent and cookie-based strategies have been instrumental in the successful rollout of our pay-or-consent model and it's been great to work with them,” said **Nino Stylianou, Head of Programmatic at Mumsnet.**

## Results

Mumsnet took note of early findings from other UK publishers who had already implemented Consent or Pay messages and used these insights to shape their banner. The result is a clear, user-friendly design with familiar button text and styling.

Additionally, Mumsnet heavily invested in Sourcepoint's A/B testing capabilities to optimize the banner for the best possible results.

## About Sourcepoint

Founded in 2015, Sourcepoint is the practical privacy software company trusted by the world's most influential brands. We believe that privacy compliance can be a catalyst for better business outcomes. With over 30 billion consumer touchpoints per month, we are the leader in enterprise-grade privacy automation for complex, dynamic compliance challenges. Sourcepoint has offices in New York, London, and Berlin.

## Dig deeper

For more insights into how Sourcepoint clients have approached a "Consent or Pay" strategy, read our case studies with [Heise Medien](#) and [The Independent](#).

Sourcepoint delivered on a tight timeline, and has proven to be an extremely competent, collaborative partner that we can always trust to help us reach our goals.



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 heise medien