



# Data Monetisation: Free Content = You're the Product

Lesson suggestion for the subjects:

Civics, Informatics/Computer Science, Media Studies, Social Studies, Economics, Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education, Business Studies

Target Group	Secondary/high school students (ages 15-18)
Topics	Consumer awareness, digital ethics, customer profiling, constructing arguments/debating
Group Size	One class group
Previous Knowledge Requirements	Basic knowledge of digital services and online advertising Concept of personal data Basic critical thinking skills
Learning Objectives from DataPro Curriculum	<p><b>A.1 Translate Data into an Asset</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Treating Data like an Online Currency:</b> Understand the value of their personal data, like how they value money. This includes recognising when and which data is processed by online services, understanding how personal data may be monetised, knowing the risks of the exploitation of personal data, and making informed decisions about sharing their data.</li> <li>● <b>Monetisation Awareness:</b> Learn about the main ways companies make money from personal and aggregated data, such as through advertising platforms and improving targeted advertising (including political ads). Be aware that many free communication services (like social media) and online content are paid for by advertising or the sale of user data. This economic model relies on monetising personal data.</li> </ul> <p><b>A.4 Awareness of Behaviour Control</b></p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Mechanism Awareness:</b> Be aware that many digital platforms use psychological tactics such as nudging, gamification, and manipulation to influence user behaviour. Recognise these tactics to avoid being unduly influenced. Recognise that usage patterns and connected devices can be used to optimise online services and targeted advertising. This involves tracking user behaviour to deliver personalised content.</li> </ul>
Additional Specific Learning Objectives	N/A
Time Frame	Single class session (approx. 45 minutes; can be shortened or extended as needed)
Technical Requirements	Projector and internet access
Training Materials and Tools from DataPro	<a href="#">Data Monetisation: Behaviour-Based Advertising</a>
Additional Specific Training Materials	N/A
Suggestions for Lesson Plan / Methodologies	<p><b>Introductory Discussion: How Online Ads Work (5 mins)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Introduce the topic of online ads with an open discussion, encouraging students to share what they already know about the topic. Ask questions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Have you ever noticed that you keep seeing ads for something you've searched for online? Why do you think that happens?</li> <li>○ Do you think everyone sees the same ads online? Why or why not?</li> <li>○ How do you think companies make money from the ads they show online?</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Explanatory statements for the teacher to use if students are not familiar with how online ads work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Most websites and apps track what we do online. This includes what we click on, what we watch, how long we stay on a page - even what we put in our shopping cart.</li> <li>○ Companies collect this information to create a profile of you - your interests, habits, even your personality. This helps advertisers show you ads that are more likely to get your attention.</li> <li>○ The more data companies have, the more they can charge for targeted advertising. Showing the</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



right ad to the right person at the right time is worth money.

- Some people don't mind personalised ads - they find them helpful. Others feel it's a bit creepy.

### **Ad Targeting Simulation (15 mins)**

- Use the Data Monetisation: Behaviour-Based Advertising presentation to explore how online behaviour influences the ads people see.
- Present each imaginary user profile (one at a time) and give students a moment to review the available ads.
- Ask students to choose which ad they think best matches the profile and briefly explain their reasoning.
- Once students have shared their answers, reveal the intended ad match by clicking to the next slide.
- After completing the game, explain to students: *Now that we've seen how ad targeting works in practice, we'll move on to discuss the ethical questions and potential risks behind these systems.*

### **Ad Targeting Ethics Discussion (20 mins)**

- Students take part in a debate on the ethics and potential risks of ad targeting.
- Depending on class size, the activity can be structured as a whole-class debate (divided into two opposing groups), or small group/pair discussions with shared feedback at the end.
- Display the following discussion prompts and allow 5 minutes for students to prepare their responses.
- Depending on available time, you may choose to use all the prompts or select a few:
  - Should companies profit from your data if it means services stay free?
  - Is ad targeting a smart use of technology, or a violation of privacy?
  - Who decides what's ethical - tech companies or users?
  - Would you accept more privacy if it meant seeing less relevant ads?
  - Personalised advertising is more helpful than harmful.

### **Wrap-Up: Class Poll (5 mins)**

- Ask students:
  - Raise your hand if you think ad targeting is mostly a good thing.
  - Raise your hand if you think it's mostly a bad thing.
  - Raise your hand if you're still unsure or think it depends.
- Briefly reflect:



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Has anyone changed their mind during the lesson?</li> <li>○ Why do you think people have different opinions about this?</li> </ul>
--	---

## DataPro Syllabi

### Data Monetisation: WP 2

### Free Content =

### You're the Product

**Institution** | ProEduca z.s.  
**Project** | DataPro  
**Dissemination level** | Public  
**Date of Submission** | June 2025  
**Main Authors** | Pippa Thompson | Lucie BrzÁková



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

