

You can now circumvent 'soft' paywalls with Google Chrome 76

By [Andy Walker](#)

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As we wrote in [an earlier report](#), Google's Chrome 76 browser is now available to all online, and with it comes a good number of quality-of-life improvements. But one particular feature has a side effect that'll interest avid online readers the most.

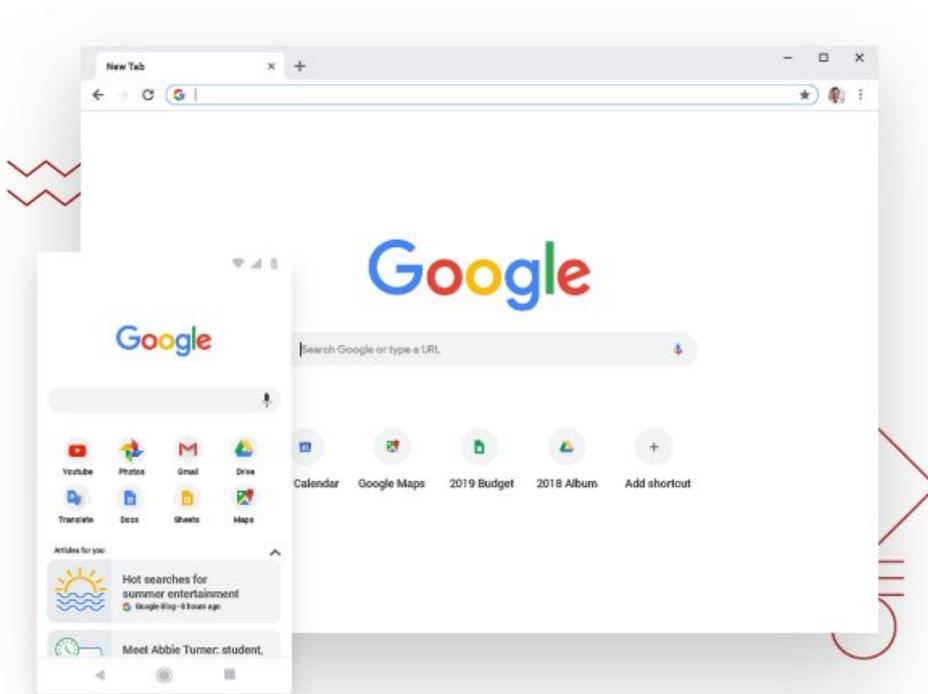


Image credit: Google Chrome.

Thanks to how Chrome 76 handles the FileSystemAPI, websites are now no longer able to detect that a user is employing Incognito Mode.

Although no cookies are stored across sessions in Incognito Mode, and websites generally use these little text scripts to track you, they could also determine using FileSystemAPI what browsing mode you were using. If it's standard, many sites allow users to read a few articles. If Incognito, some sites block users altogether.



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The fact that sites can no longer detect the browsing status using FileSystemAPI makes it a lot harder for websites with paywalls to restrict you from reading articles.

Incognito Mode is now [truly Incognito Mode](#).

“ Chrome Incognito mode has been detectable for years, due to the FileSystem API implementation. As of Chrome 76, this is fixed.

Apologies to the "detect private mode" scripts out there.   pic.twitter.com/3LWFXQyy7w— Paul Irish (@paul_irish) [June 11, 2019](#) ”

The implications were [already known back in June](#), when Google Chrome developer Paul Irish posted [the above tweet](#).

Google has also previously [suggested](#) that sites affected by the change monitor the impact of the FileSystemAPI tweak on their analytics, or harden their paywall strategies.



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Andy Walker 5 Apr 2018



Of course, the Incognito Mode fix will only allow users to hurdle “soft paywalls”, sites that offer users a predetermined number of free articles per period. Those paywalls that still require a subscription, well, you’ll have to pay for those.

But considering that the art of journalism does require funding, perhaps consider investing your spare change into quality reporting, rather than sneaking your way around it, hmm?

ABOUT ANDY WALKER

Camper by day, run-and-gunner by night, Andy is editor at Memeburn and prefers his toast like his coffee -- dark and crunchy. Specialising in spotting the next big Instagram cat star, Andy also dabbles in smartphone and game reviews over on Gearburn.

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