



TAG US FRAUD BENCHMARK REPORT OCTOBER 2024

A report conducted by The 614 Group,
on behalf of TAG





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Trust is the foundation of a thriving digital advertising industry, and it must extend equally to include all of its constituents: the brands who place ads, the publishers who run ads, and, ultimately, the consumers who see and respond to them. To maintain that trust, advertisers must have confidence that their ads are being placed in environments free of fraud and other criminal activities, while their publisher partners must have equal confidence that their inventory is being transacted in an honest and fraud-free manner, so they are fully and fairly compensated.

Founded in 2014, TAG fosters confidence and trust in digital advertising by bringing companies together to strengthen safety and transparency, including its work leading the cross-industry fight against fraud. TAG's Certified Against Fraud Program (TAG Certification) specifically targets invalid traffic (IVT) in the digital advertising ecosystem, providing companies a way to publicly demonstrate their commitment to protecting brands and their supply chain partners from IVT.

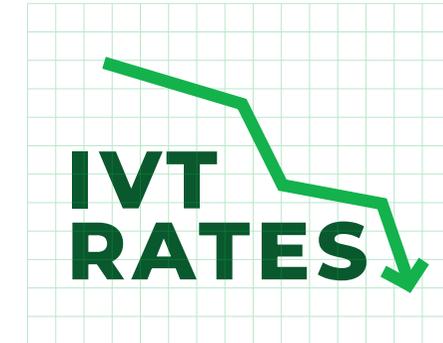
KEY FINDINGS



The IVT rate in TAG Certified Channels (TCCs), in which at least three entities involved in the transaction – such as the media agency, buy-side platform, sell-side platform, and/or publisher – have achieved the TAG Certified Against Fraud Seal, continued to be held below 1% for the fourth consecutive year at 0.79%, thus ensuring that fraud rates remained predictable, manageable, and low for buyers, while inventory quality stayed high for sellers.



In contrast to the rate in TCCs, the rate in Non-Certified Channels (NCCs) – in which at least one entity involved in the transaction has achieved the TAG Certified Against Fraud Seal, but not enough entities for the channel to qualify as TCC – was more than 50% higher at 1.19%, showing the importance of driving broad TAG Certification across the supply chain.



From 2020 to 2024, IVT rates continue to trend downward, showing the success of the industry's sustained efforts in fraud prevention.

114X
MORE TCC INVENTORY

The industry's collaborative efforts have been highlighted through the exponential increase in impressions being transacted through TCCs over the last seven years. The volume of TCC impressions has grown by a staggering more than 114-fold in that time, from 6.5 billion in 2017 to 745.5 billion in 2024, with a 15.04% increase in inventory flowing through TCCs over the last year alone.

\$10.8
BILLION IN SAVINGS

Other research also reinforces the significant progress made by the industry in collaboratively tackling fraud over the last decade, with a new study released by TAG, in partnership with the 4A's, Association of National Advertisers (ANA), and Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) documenting [\\$10.8 billion in savings](#) to US advertisers from industry efforts to reduce IVT.



While interviews with agency executives raised a potential risk of complacency due to the industry's accomplishments, those leaders also affirmed that criminals are working tirelessly to turn back the clock, and the industry must be continuously vigilant to maintain its hard-fought gains.



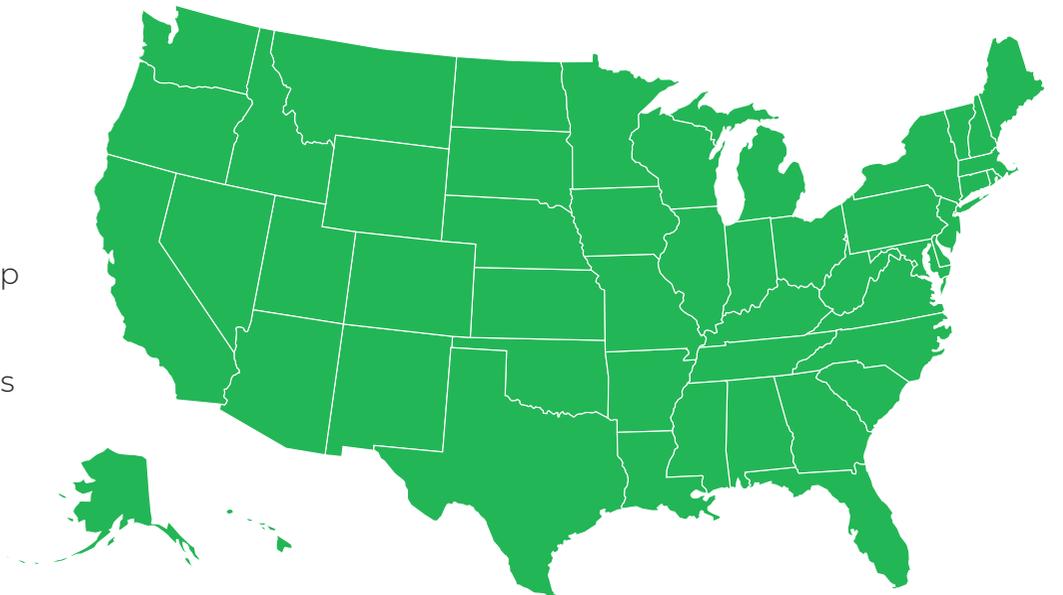
Interviews with agency executives also illustrated the opportunity to extend TAG's proven collaborative model to help address other supply chain issues, such as lack of transparency.

Agency executives further indicated that there are many challenges facing the industry regarding definitions and standards around Made for Advertising (MFA) sites, fraud in emerging channels, sustainability and AI where TAG could play a valuable role.

STUDY BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

The digital advertising industry has long recognized that combating fraud demands a united effort, with all market participants collaborating to ensure traffic quality and maintain brand safety.

Since 2017, TAG has partnered with The 614 Group to track the industry's progress in reducing invalid traffic (IVT) by evaluating the effectiveness of purchasing through TAG Certified Channels (TCC) worldwide. In 2024, The 614 Group conducted its eighth annual benchmark study, in order to assess the quantitative impact of TAG Certification on reducing fraud in digital ad campaigns across the United States.



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This report employs the methodology established by The 614 Group in 2017 for the inaugural TAG US Benchmark Study, a framework that has been used in all subsequent global benchmark studies.

Between January 1, 2024, and June 30, 2024, The 614 Group gathered data from top agency holding companies and their MRC-accredited measurement vendors to analyze and aggregate impressions for US campaigns. This work covered a range of media types, including display media and video ads across desktop, mobile web, in-app environments, and connected television (CTV).

The analysis was comprehensive, with 100% of the impressions provided by participating agencies being analyzed, without any sampling.

Once the data was received, it was securely aggregated within a database in order to facilitate accurate reporting. Additionally, The 614 Group conducted a series of background interviews with industry experts and executives from major agency holding companies to gather qualitative insights.

STUDY ELEMENTS

<p>Inventory Type</p> <p>Desktop Display & Video</p> <p>Mobile Display & Video</p> <p>In-App Display & Video</p> <p>CTV</p>	<p>Types of Fraud Examined</p> <p>GIVT</p> <p>SIVT</p>	<p>Volume of Impressions Examined</p> <p>908.415 billion</p>
<p>Measurement Period</p> <p>1 Jan. 2024 - 30 June 2024</p>	<p>Markets Examined</p> <p>United States</p>	<p>Data Contributors</p> <p>dentsu group^m</p> <p>horizon media IPG</p> <p>OMG OmnicomMediaGroup PUBLICIS GROUPE</p>

For the study, The 614 Group used the ad impression categorizations provided by the agencies' measurement vendors, including DoubleVerify and Integral Ad Science (IAS). Ad Impressions from Moat by Oracle Data Cloud are included in reports prior to the 2024 TAG US Benchmark Study. All three ad verification vendors are TAG Certified Against Fraud and hold Media Rating Council (MRC) accreditations for measuring both Sophisticated Invalid Traffic (SIVT) and General Invalid Traffic (GIVT).

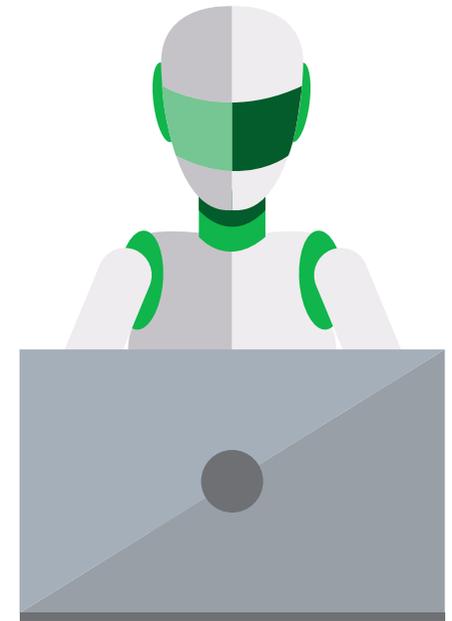
Fraud is a generic term, covering a wide array of familiar and emerging activities meant to siphon budgets away from publishers and advertisers. For the purposes of this report, the results focus on the broader metric of IVT, which the MRC defines as, "traffic that does not meet certain ad serving quality or completeness criteria, or otherwise does not represent legitimate ad traffic that should be included in measurement counts."

In its [Invalid Traffic Detection and Filtration Standards Addendum](#), the MRC categories two types of fraud: General Invalid Traffic (GIVT) and Sophisticated Invalid Traffic (SIVT).

Here is how the MRC defines each:

GIVT: "consists of traffic identified through routine means of filtration executed through application of lists or with other standardized parameter checks."

SIVT: "consists of more difficult to detect situations that require advanced analytics, multi-point corroboration/ coordination, significant human intervention, etc., to analyze and identify."



Another set of important definitions are the channels described in the report: TAG Certified Channels (TCC) and Non-Certified Channels (NCCs). Here's how they are defined for the purposes of this report, as each channel offers a different perspective on the impact of TAG Certification on traffic quality:



TAG Certified Channels (TCCs):

Channels in which at least three entities involved in the transaction – such as the media agency, buy-side platform, sell-side platform, and/or publisher – have achieved the TAG Certified Against Fraud Seal.

Non-Certified Channels (NCCs):

Channels in which at least one entity involved in a transaction has achieved the TAG Certified Against Fraud Seal, but not enough entities for the channel to qualify as TCC.

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

IVT RATES BY TAG CERTIFIED CHANNELS (TCCS) VS NON-CERTIFIED CHANNELS (NCCS)

IVT is 33.6% lower in TAG Certified Channels than in Non-Certified Channels .

IVT Rates in TAG-Certified Channels	0.79%
IVT Rates in Non-Certified Channels	1.19%

The number of impressions that media holding companies submitted to The 614 Group for analysis continues to increase year over year. In 2024 the 614 Group analyzed a total of 908.415 billion measured impressions, a 4.18% increase over last year's 871.99 billion impressions.

**IVT RATES BY CHANNEL
AND MEDIA TYPE**

		Volume of Impressions	% IVT Rate
Desktop	Display	185.6 billion	1.47%
	Video	42.5 billion	1.46%
Mobile Web	Display	197.2 billion	0.46%
	Video	44.9 billion	0.39%
Mobile In-App	Display	116.8 billion	0.51%
	Video	94.8 billion	0.64%
CTV		63.8 billion	0.42%

YEAR-OVER-YEAR COMPARISON IN TAG CERTIFIED CHANNELS BY MEDIA TYPE

Desktop video and mobile web video have shown the most notable improvements in reducing IVT from 2023 to 2024.

IVT rates observed in Mobile In-App Video and CTV increased significantly in 2024. IVT rates in CTV alone tripled from Q2 2023 to Q2 2024, while impression volumes increased by 30 percent (although notably those rates remain under 1% in TCCs). These findings could point to improvements in IVT detection and measurement capabilities as measurement technology has improved, but also highlight potential areas for continued vigilance and improvement for the industry.

Mobile web display remains the most consistent in maintaining low IVT rates, while mobile in-app video faces new challenges with a recent rise in fraud.

		2021	2022	2023	2024
Desktop	Display	1.15%	1.59%	1.51%	1.47%
	Video	1.71%	1.79%	1.78%	1.46%
Mobile Web	Display	0.63%	0.57%	0.45%	0.46%
	Video	0.70%	0.61%	0.42%	0.39%
Mobile In-App	Display	0.83%	0.83%	0.66%	0.51%
	Video	0.48%	0.57%	0.42%	0.64%
CTV		0.34%	0.49%	0.16%	0.42%

YEAR-OVER-YEAR COMPARISON OF ANNUAL US TAG FRAUD BENCHMARK REPORTS

The volume of TCC impressions has grown exponentially from 6.5 billion in 2017 to 745.5 billion in 2024.

This shows the rapid adoption and scaling of TAG Certified Channels, with a notable surge in TCC impressions every year.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Region	US	US	US	US	US	US	US	US
Types of Fraud Measured	GIVT	GIVT/SIVT	GIVT/SIVT	GIVT/SIVT	GIVT/SIVT	GIVT/SIVT	GIVT/SIVT	GIVT/SIVT
Volume of TCC Impressions	6.5 billion	75 billion	200 billion	353 billion	445 billion	581 billion	648 billion	745 billion
Inventory Types	Desktop Display Desktop Video	Desktop Display Desktop Video Mobile Web Display Mobile Web Video Mobile App Display Mobile App Video	Desktop Display Desktop Video Mobile Web Display Mobile Web Video Mobile App Display Mobile App Video	Desktop Display Desktop Video Mobile Web Display Mobile Web Video Mobile App Display Mobile App Video CTV	Desktop Display Desktop Video Mobile Web Display Mobile Web Video Mobile App Display Mobile App Video CTV	Desktop Display Desktop Video Mobile Web Display Mobile Web Video Mobile App Display Mobile App Video CTV	Desktop Display Desktop Video Mobile Web Display Mobile Web Video Mobile App Display Mobile App Video CTV	Desktop Display Desktop Video Mobile Web Display Mobile Web Video Mobile App Display Mobile App Video CTV
Number of Participating Agencies	3	5	6	6	6	6	6	6
Overall % IVT Rates in TCCs	1.48%	1.68%	1.41%	1.05%	0.86%	0.98%	0.82%	0.79%

**COMPARISON OF IVT
IMPRESSIONS AND GIVT/
SIVT RATES WITHIN TCCS
BY MEDIA TYPE**

	Media Type	Total Impressions	IVT Impressions	% GIVT	% SIVT	% IVT
Overall	All	745,475,699,654	5,898,735,651	0.23%	0.56%	0.79%
Desktop	Display	185,588,651,506	2,721,837,147	0.47%	0.99%	1.47%
	Video	42,452,744,800	620,110,126	0.42%	1.04%	1.46%
Mobile Web	Display	197,194,628,901	905,618,052	0.12%	0.34%	0.46%
	Video	44,879,177,775	174,944,443	0.10%	0.29%	0.39%
Mobile In-App	Display	116,790,218,688	597,750,562	0.06%	0.46%	0.51%
	Video	94,761,149,596	607,826,467	0.22%	0.42%	0.64%
CTV		63,809,128,388	270,648,854	0.16%	0.26%	0.42%

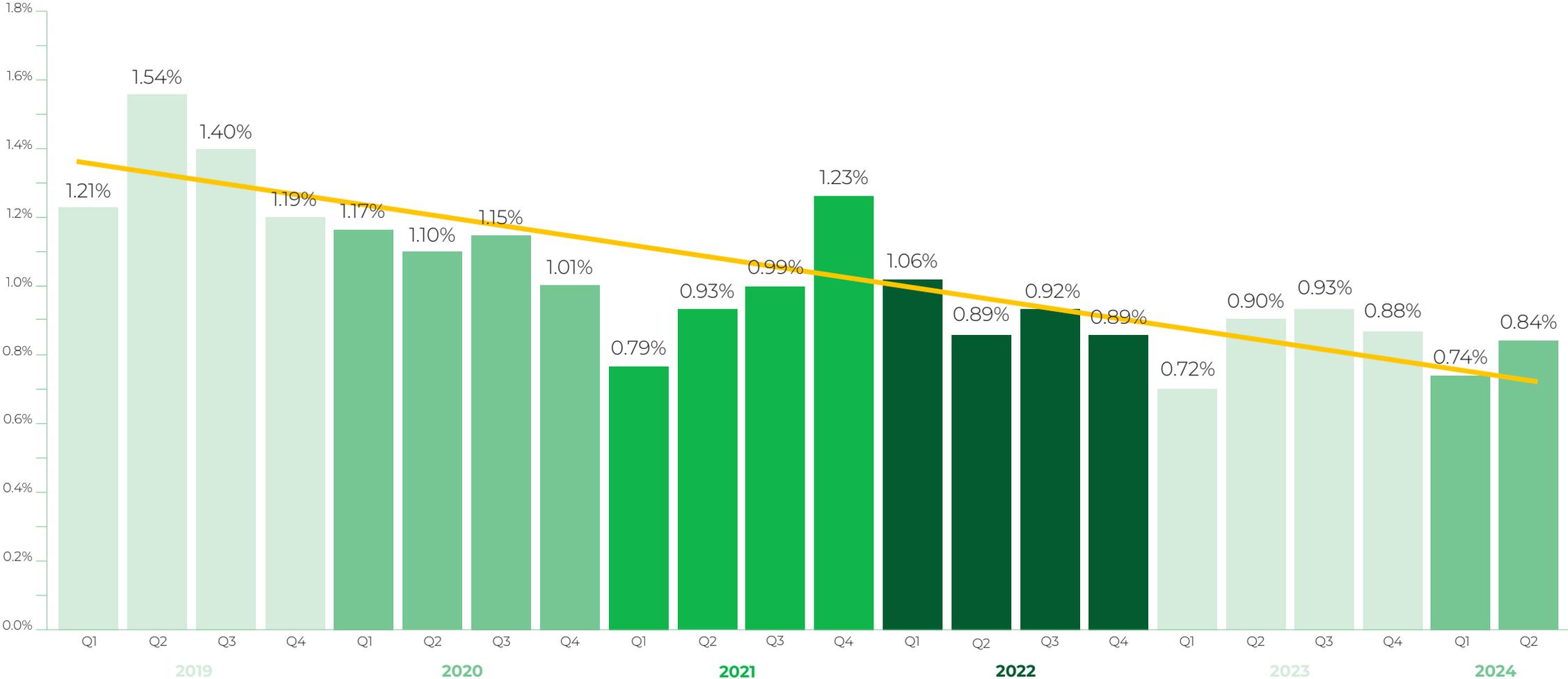
COMPARISON OF IVT RATES IN TCCS BY MEDIA TYPE AND PLATFORM BY QUARTER

Overall IVT rates remain relatively stable but show slight fluctuations. After a peak of 0.93% in Q3 2023, the rate dropped to 0.74% in Q1 2024 before rising again to 0.84% in Q2 2024. That said, it's still below 1%.

Desktop Video had a significant IVT spike in Q4 2023, but it quickly subsided, indicating a possible one-time issue.

		Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023	Q1 2024	Q2 2024
Overall		0.72%	0.90%	0.93%	0.88%	0.74%	0.84%
Desktop	Display	1.31%	1.69%	1.58%	1.50%	1.35%	1.59%
	Video	1.59%	1.91%	1.92%	2.90%	1.43%	1.48%
Mobile Web	Display	0.41%	0.48%	0.43%	0.45%	0.46%	0.46%
	Video	0.34%	0.47%	0.51%	0.45%	0.43%	0.35%
Mobile In-App	Display	0.54%	0.76%	0.89%	0.84%	0.54%	0.49%
	Video	0.37%	0.45%	0.86%	0.53%	0.46%	0.80%
CTV		0.16%	0.15%	0.15%	0.17%	0.35%	0.48%

**YEAR-OVER-YEAR
COMPARISON OF
QUARTERLY IVT RATES
IN TAG-CERTIFIED
CHANNELS**



QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

The qualitative portion of the research involved in-depth background interviews with executives at major agency holding companies. This component of the research aims to complement the impression-level data by providing a deeper understanding of issues, trends, and analyses from the perspectives of those leading anti-fraud efforts.

The following people were interviewed on background:



Deva Bronson

EVP, Head of Media Responsibility

Joseph Swierczewski

Director, Brand Assurance

Jessica Penny

*Senior Brand Manager,
Brand Assurance*



Jason Lee

EVP, Brand Safety & Consumer Advocacy

Eric Warburton

SVP Ad Operations



David Byrne

EVP of Global Brand Safety & Privacy

Chandon Jones

SVP, US Ad Operations



Anny Buakaew

US Group Director, Platform Operations

Manny Mock

Associate Director, Operations



Nikcyi Cifani

Director, Digital Standards

KEY INSIGHTS

Key insights that emerged from the interviews are summarized below by topic.

OVERALL FRAUD CONTROL AND IMPROVEMENT

Executives said that IVT – as defined by the MRC – is now largely under control across major agencies, with rates being held below 1% in TAG-Certified Channels for four consecutive years. Collaboration between agencies, publishers, DSPs, and verification partners has significantly reduced fraud – a stark contrast to earlier days when campaigns could experience fraud rates as high as 20% to 30%.

Executives emphasized the importance of maintaining consistency across accounts and using verification throughout the campaign lifecycle. Agencies also noted their focus on accountability and collaborative efforts between stakeholders.

VALUE OF TAG

Executives told interviewers that their agencies have a zero-tolerance for fraud and that SOWs/contracts reflect that standard. For this reason, TAG certification is highly valued for ensuring quality and reducing fraud, with many clients requiring or requesting TAG Certified Channels, and Tag Certification has become a key factor in attracting and retaining business.

Some agencies believe TAG's successful anti-fraud model could be applied to other supply chain challenges like transparency, once the defining criteria and measurement for newer concerns such as sustainability or AI are developed.



COSTS OF VERIFICATION AND IMPACT ON CHANNELS

Agency executives say that clients are increasingly focused on managing overall costs related to brand safety and verification, with some preferring to limit headcount rather than expand teams dedicated to these tasks. Some noted internal resistance to adding more full-time staff or external partners to manage these functions. A key issue around such resistance is a lack of understanding as to the long-term savings and value of proactive pre-bid and post-bid verification.

A notable exception are small to midsize clients, who executives noted are often willing to invest in FTEs for fraud detection and mitigation. That said, executives said that some may question the added costs of supplementary programmatic services like brand safety tools, asking if they truly enhance campaign performance or improve KPIs.

DEFINING FRAUD

Most agencies follow MRC standards for defining fraud, but definitions can vary based on client needs. Most executives believe that machine learning is improving fraud detection.

Some executives said that distinguishing between GIVT and SIVT is confusing among people who aren't well versed in the AdOps function. It is generally understood that non-human traffic is a core concern; less understood is the fact that GIVT pertains to non-human, but not nefarious traffic and SIVT adds another layer of filtration that does include some nefarious activity.

MFA

There was a consensus among executives that many clients still do not fully understand the distinction between MFA and IVT, and often lump both under the umbrella of brand safety. Agencies are working to better educate clients about the differences and address MFA more effectively, arguing that MFAs require more nuanced measurement and quality checks rather than being grouped together with IVT.

EMERGING CHANNELS

Executives said they are concerned with IVT in newer channels, such as audio, gaming, and CTV, where standards and detection technologies are still catching up. One executive raised the concern that with podcasting, an “impression” is counted when a user downloads a podcast or episode. This is leading to “viewability” questions among clients who don’t want to pay for impressions if the user never listens to it.

Clients are slowly starting to ask questions about brand safety and fraud in these emerging channels, according to agencies, but protection efforts are still evolving. At least one executive mentioned that AI technologies could help in these channels, but standards for AI’s use in fraud detection on newer platforms need to be developed and monitored.

Clients are slowly starting to ask questions about brand safety and fraud in emerging channels.

CONCLUSION

The digital advertising industry has made tremendous strides in its fight against fraud over the past decade, achieving significant reductions in invalid traffic (IVT) and demonstrating the power of collective action across the major trade organizations and hundreds of individual companies.

Through the widespread adoption of effective standards and programs, including the TAG Certified Against Fraud Program, advertisers have saved billions of ad dollars, while publishers have increased their inventory quality, and all participants have gained confidence in their supply chain partners.

The 2024 TAG US Fraud Benchmark Report demonstrates that TCCs have continued to hold IVT rates below the accepted industry benchmark of 1% for an impressive five consecutive years. That proven success has led to a dramatic shift in advertiser spending into

TCCs, as impressions measured in those channels have skyrocketed by 114-fold, from 6.5 billion in 2017 to over 745 billion in 2024.

Despite that success, new areas of concern around fraud continue to arise, particularly in emerging channels such as CTV and mobile in-app video, where IVT rates have increased (although are still being held under 1% in TCCs).

Interviews with agency executives reinforced the success of industry efforts, with leaders noting that while fraud has been largely contained in traditional channels, emerging platforms such as audio, gaming, and CTV require continued focus. Executives also emphasized that criminal actors are constantly developing new tactics to exploit the digital ecosystem, and without continued vigilance, fraud could once again become a significant problem.



Agencies stressed the importance of maintaining the current momentum to protect the progress made.

Additionally, many agency leaders highlighted the success of TAG's collaborative approach in fostering trust and accountability across the supply chain. They believe this model could be expanded to address other pressing challenges, such as transparency.

Agency executives acknowledged the need for consistent standards, and some noted that TAG could play a crucial role in defining those standards for emerging areas like sustainability and AI-driven advertising.

Looking ahead, the industry must remain dedicated to maintaining TAG's rigorous anti-fraud standards and expanding the community of TAG Certified companies, while also strengthening fraud prevention across new and emerging channels. By maintaining the best practices established by TAG and encouraging broader adoption of certification, the industry can prevent a resurgence of fraud. Vigilance is key, as complacency could undo the hard-won progress achieved over the past several years.

For continued success against fraud and new challenges, the industry can continue to build on TAG's successful framework. By leveraging this proven model, the industry can confront emerging risks and ensure a safer, more transparent digital advertising ecosystem, securing the trust of advertisers, publishers, and consumers going forward.



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