

DATA HYGIENE:

How much does quality of data matter?

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Fully understanding and managing the quality of data establishes a strong foundation for highly efficient media campaigns

What is often overlooked in media executions is data hygiene: the validity of audience segments, the impact of viewable/fraudulent/brand-safe impressions, and proper on-site tag management. Fully understanding and managing the quality of data establishes a strong foundation for highly efficient media campaigns.

The Media Kitchen approach

It is crucial to maintain the quality of data flow, and therefore The Media Kitchen (TMK) partners with Data Management Platforms (DMP) with transparent methodologies that apply ad-verification data in a meaningful manner, and sustain a clean site-tagging infrastructure for our clients.

I Keeping data fresh

How do we feel about milk cartons with no expiration date? More often than not, audience data segments provided by third-party vendors show no indication of when it was last updated, how the data was gathered, and why it is more accurate than other data sources.

Even when a first-party DMP is present, other platforms are involved to find look-alike audiences, and it can be troublesome when they don't pass a simple eye test. We only partner with data providers that have comprehensive documentation on:

- Data refresh frequency
- Data gathering methodology and other third-party platforms that may be involved
- Ability to export data for desktop, mobile, and social targeting

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II

Verified impressions

Viewability alone is a passive metric, and can be easily manipulated by publishers. And quite frankly, the standard definition of a viewable impression is too generous, and we only partner with platforms that allow us to define our own viewability threshold. Fraudulent traffic can be misleading as there are plenty of harmless bots scanning the web to keep it clean. Brand safety is difficult to keep track of when millions of impressions are displayed on thousands, if not tens of thousands, of sites. Measuring all of the above is one thing, but making them collectively inform meaningful actions is another.

The Media Kitchen regularly performs data forensics by answering the following list of questions:

- **What % of the client's total impressions are viewable, non-fraudulent, and safe? What's the effective verified CPM and CPA?**
- **What days of week, times of day generate the most wasteful traffic?**
- **Which Supply-Side Platform (SSP) or publisher is delivering the most wasteful traffic?**

These are just a few of the many questions we consider. Naturally, this process allows us to keep the client's SSP/publisher partners concise as we continue to exclude ad suppliers that do not meet our standards.

III

We monitor uninvited tracking

With a plethora of ad platforms in the space, maintaining existing relationships while testing new partners can result in piles of pixels building up on the brand site. Oftentimes, pixels from the past are left on the site, serving zero purpose, and/or pixels from a completed test remain even when the campaign is inactive. We ensure our clients' sites carry only active, meaningful tracking in place through ad server containers or tag management platforms.

Once tracking pixels are vetted and implemented on brand sites, there will be instances of non-vetted, non-approved pixels firing when users visit. This occurs when an approved platform allows its partner to collect particular data to enhance the product's offering. This can be troublesome, especially for clients who are sensitive to protecting their users' privacy. As an agency, we ask all of our partners to list other 3rd-party pixels that will appear on the brand site, to describe the purpose, and to label every type of information that is collected by these partners.

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OUR DATA PHILOSOPHY

TMK takes a rigorous approach to each of our client's data hygiene, as it ultimately prescribes the overall narrative of the media strategy:

- **Constantly evaluate data providers, and only partner with the most transparent platforms**
- **Set up ad-verification monitoring, and create custom reporting based on data forensics**
- **Fully assess client's brand pixel/tag management, and clean up to minimize lag while maximizing data application**
- **All of the above are logged and updated in a document for our clients to easily keep track of data flow**

Knowing what type of audience data is being leveraged for programmatic campaigns, how effective every campaign's impressions truly are, and why a pixel or tag is required on the brand site helps us define clear roles for each partner. Ultimately, it minimizes doubt in reporting.