Programmatic Transparency Benchmark

2024 Benchmark: Background Information and Initial Findings

June 2024

tag TrustNet

ANA

fiducia

Foreword

Open web programmatic advertising has grown dramatically over the past decade and is now an important and large media investment for most marketers. Programmatic advertising offers key benefits, including the ability to target the right audience and cost savings from automation. Unlike the current walled garden world, open web advertising allows for more independent performance measurement while simultaneously supporting quality journalism, diversity of choice, and minority-owned and -operated media.

When programmatic tools are used diligently, the open web provides one of the best opportunities for advertisers to reach broad and diverse audiences efficiently across the entire internet. But if marketers take their eye off the ball, suspect inventory can find a way into media plans, diminishing the potential of programmatic advertising as a useful tool to drive results.

The purpose of the ANA's Programmatic Media Supply Chain Transparency Study was to look at the $88 billion open web and to understand its relative productivity, as well as areas of wastefulness. The study revealed that, of the $88 billion in open web spending, some $22 billion is wasteful or unproductive. Key findings of the study:

- **The lack of data access**: Advertisers not being able to access their data for proper evaluation
- **Information asymmetry:** The sellers of programmatic ads knowing a lot more than the buyers regarding the cost/value relationship of programmatic inventory
- **Surprising "Made for Advertising" activity:** 21 percent of impressions and 15 percent of spending
- **High number of websites used for an average campaign:** 44,000

As a next step, we have decided with our board to introduce an always-on Programmatic Transparency Benchmark together with TAG TrustNet, the joint initiative of TAG and Fiducia that played a key role in coming up with the study findings. The Benchmark is here to help marketers in their journey to transparency, by federating their efforts to gain permanent access to log-level data (LLD) from their suppliers, and in using the aggregated data of the participants to produce the quarterly ANA/TAG TrustNet Programmatic Transparency Benchmark.

The Benchmark has received an extremely positive response among ANA members. The ANA expectation is for each of their suppliers to provide always-on access to their LLD feed according to our data requirements, at no cost and with no limitations in the use advertisers can make of it.

The open internet is essential for advertisers because it fosters accessibility, innovation, and choice. It's a win-win for marketers, media owners, and users alike! The study findings wouldn't have been possible without the ecosystem providing transparency. Rather than diverting funds to less transparent channels, the solution lies in getting access to data and implementing our study recommendations. Doing so can improve your ROI by more than 25 percent, reduce reputational risk, and enhance the overall ecosystem for everyone.

The Benchmark is currently focused on driving transparency with access to data from suppliers active in the open web and is encouraging advertisers to select suppliers providing them unconditional access to impression LLD. Walled gardens are next in line, and with regulations such as the EU Digital Markets Act in play, it is only a matter of time for all of programmatic media to become a fair, transparent, accountable and efficient global marketplace where the Benchmark will play its role as a unified industry measurement framework.

1. What Is the Programmatic Transparency Benchmark?

The Programmatic Transparency Benchmark is not a study. It is an ongoing Benchmark providing a range of indicators relating to the health of the programmatic advertising industry as it moves from an opaque to a transparent supply chain. Advertisers should get access to the same data as their suppliers when it comes to their campaigns to be able to assess the risks and value they get for their investments. The time for transparency is now.

Recognizing the need to help marketers take control of their programmatic supply chains, the ANA and TAG TrustNet have launched the Programmatic Transparency Benchmark as a next step toward industry transparency. It follows the findings of the [ANA Programmatic Media Supply Chain Transparency Study Complete Report](#) released in December 2023. The key finding of the study was that there is $22 billion in efficiency gains available to advertisers.

The ANA and TAG TrustNet have launched the Benchmark to help marketers in their journey to transparency, starting with ANA members, by federating efforts to gain permanent access to LLD from their suppliers, and in using the aggregated data of the participants to set industry benchmarks against which individual advertisers can compare their own metrics.

Participating advertisers have the option to get access to a monthly evaluation of their supply chain against the Benchmark.

Providing advertisers control over their supply chain

To decide on who to work with, and to make responsible, informed media investment decisions, advertisers want control over their programmatic supply chain. In a technology- and data-driven industry, this can only be achieved with data symmetry, through:

- Always-on access to impression LLD from an advertiser's suppliers, including DSPs, ad verification companies, and SSPs

- No limitations on how the data gets used to optimize ad spend productivity and realize the efficiency gains identified in the study
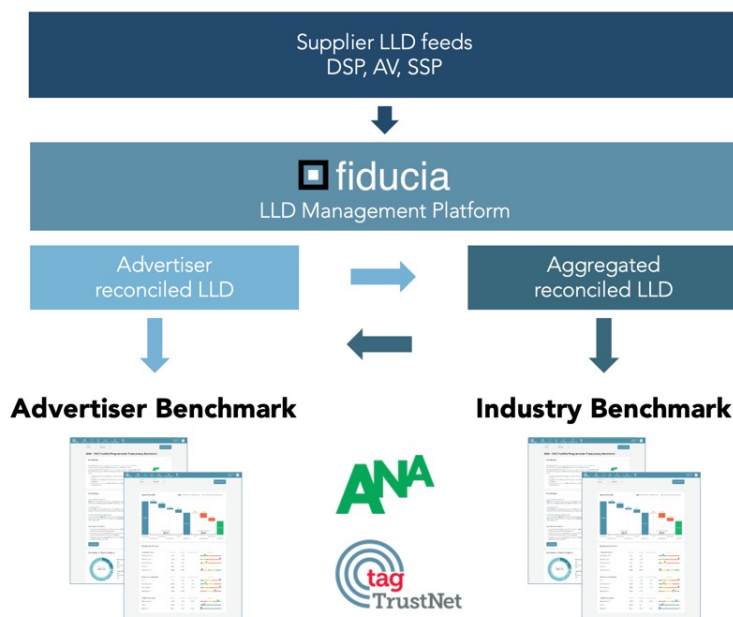
The Benchmark is focused on driving transparency with access to data from suppliers active in the open web and encourages advertisers to select suppliers that provide them with unconditional access to impression LLD. Walled garden providers are a future consideration, with regulations such as the EU Digital Markets Act in play. Programmatic advertising is being urged to become a fair, transparent, accountable, and efficient global marketplace.

The Benchmark report will be published quarterly beginning the second half of 2024. It reviews advertisers' progress in gaining access to impression LLD from their suppliers and tracks key transparency metrics over time.

Encouraging advertisers to select suppliers providing always-on unconditional access to impression LLD

Programmatic Transparency Benchmark to be released for the first time in second half of 2024
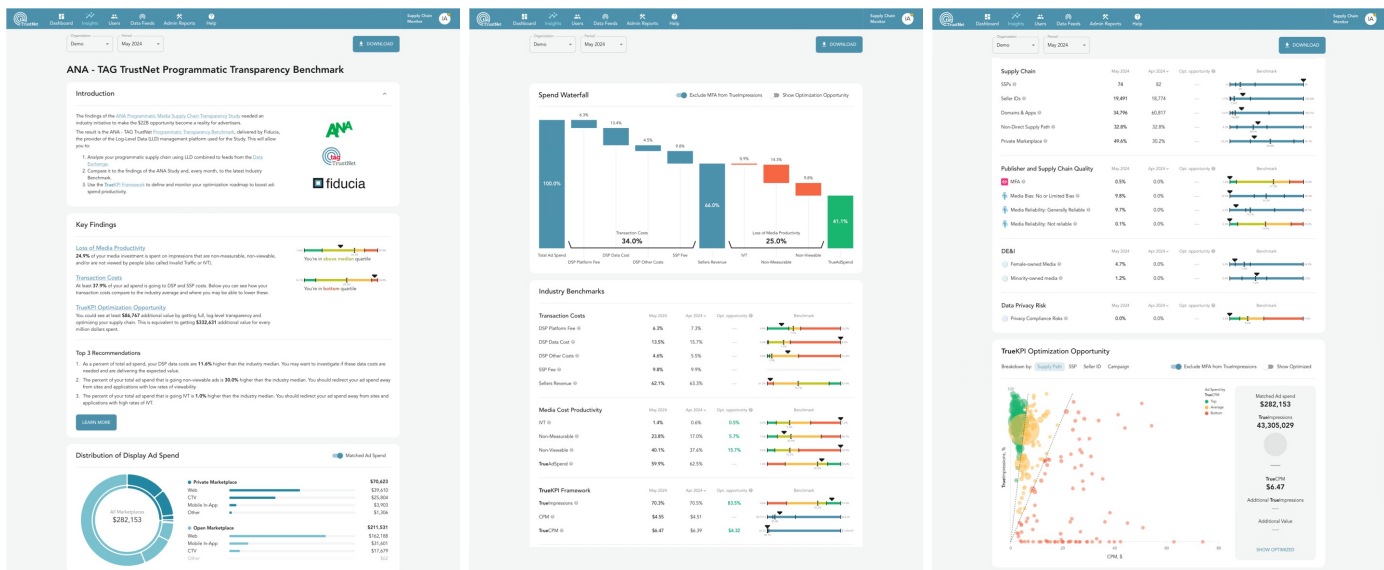
2. Legal Framework and Requirements

To produce the Benchmark, the ANA has signed a partnership agreement with TAG TrustNet, which was formed by the TAG trade association (of which the ANA is a founder and board member) and Fiducia, the provider of the LLD management platform. TAG TrustNet was the key technology partner behind the ANA Programmatic Media Supply Chain Transparency Study.

Data requirements fall outside of data privacy regulation

Advertisers participating in the Benchmark sign a licensing agreement with Fiducia and a letter of authorization asking their programmatic suppliers to provide access to an impression LLD feed related to their campaigns in line with the TAG TrustNet Data Requirements.

The data requirements are based on standardized data fields used by industry suppliers that, in most cases, are readily available. The data is expected to be provided by suppliers to any advertiser asking for it every 24 hours, with no limitations in time, at no cost and with no limitations in the use advertisers can make of it. The data fields only cover impression, delivery, and cost-level data. All fall outside of the scope of data privacy protection laws, including, without limitation, the GDPR and the CCPA.

3. Data Access, Collection, and Reconciliation

As part of the orientation process, Fiducia works with marketers to map supply chains and confirm the suppliers involved in programmatic transactions. This process allows Fiducia to identify the data sources that represent a significant amount of ad spending, and if required, develop new data connectors for previously-unintegrated suppliers.

Every programmatic vendor has his own data structure and field naming conventions, which requires the development of custom data connectors to input, process, and harmonize data feeds. TAG TrustNet publishes a quarterly LLD Register that tracks the providers for which such a data connector has already been developed.

Fiducia will confirm legal consent and account information with suppliers to configure LLD access, as well as specific technical processes for data activation. LLD from DSP, SSP, and ad verification

Records from all platforms are connected to form a reconciled record for individual ad impressions

platforms are delivered to Fiducia using standard data transfer methods, including S3 buckets, Google Big Query, SFTP, and Snowflake.

Using common impression record identifiers (such as OpenRTB impression IDs), the records from all platforms are connected to form a reconciled record for individual ad impressions. These can be enriched with other third-party data sources that are part of the Fiducia Data Exchange, including MFA, DEI, sustainability, media bias, and user privacy ratings.

4. Benchmark and TrueKPI metrics

The metrics included in the Benchmark cover:

- The distribution of ad spending running over private and open marketplaces for web, CTV, mobile in-app, and other channels

- The ad spending waterfall, including transaction costs and media productivity (i.e., the cost of ad impressions not matching quality requirements)

- Detailed quantitative and qualitative metrics covering the supply chain, including MFA, DEI, sustainability, and user privacy risk

- Metrics in the TrueKPI Framework such as TrueImpressions, TrueAdspend, and TrueCPM

The Benchmark is based on the aggregated and anonymized data of participants and provides quarterly industry metrics showing the evolution of ranges, median values, and quartiles. Individual advertisers are provided with that same Benchmark every month with an indication of how their metrics compare.

The TrueKPI Framework, developed in the context of the ANA study, allows marketers to identify how to increase programmatic ROI by evaluating impressions according to their true value, rather than price. The creation of value is measured by differentiating TrueImpressions from total impressions, TrueAdspend from total ad spend, and TrueCPM from total CPM.
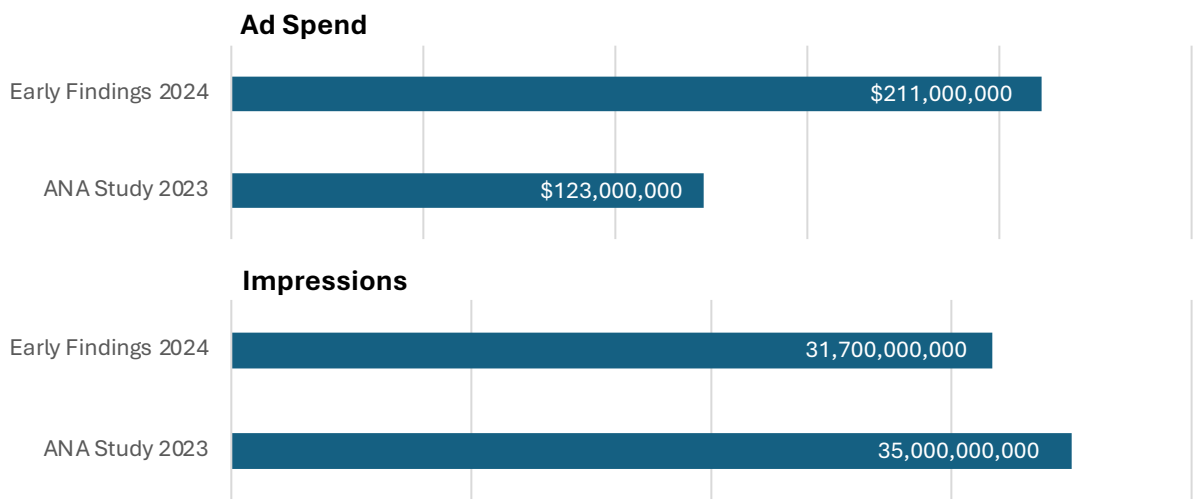
The TrueKPI Framework, developed in the context of the ANA study, allows marketers to identify how to increase programmatic ROI by evaluating impressions according to their true value, rather than price

page 5
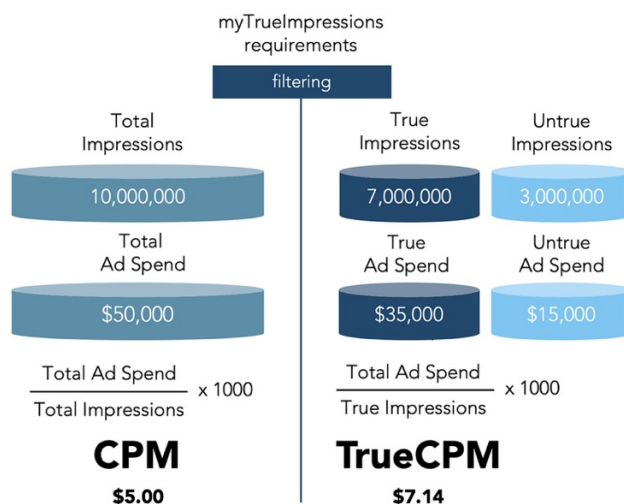
5. Early Findings

The initial input and data mapping phase of the 2024 ANA Programmatic Benchmark has provided the ANA and TAG TrustNet with an updated view on some of the key metrics uncovered during the ANA study.

The project team has collected data amounting to more than 31 billion impressions and $211 million in total advertising costs from January 2024 to May 2024. This initial sample represents a large uptick in the size and scale of spending tracked against key transparency metrics thus far.

Ad Spend

Early Findings 2024	$211,000,000
ANA Study 2023	$123,000,000

Impressions

Early Findings 2024	31,700,000,000
ANA Study 2023	35,000,000,000

Finding 1: Significant Drop in MFA Spending

The average percentage of total ad spending delivered on Made for Advertising (MFA) websites (as defined by Deepsee.io) was 4 percent. The median value was 0.6 percent.

There were two notable groups of advertisers.

- **Group 1**: 73 percent of participating advertisers where MFA ad spending was under 2 percent. This group had an average MFA ad spend of 0.5 percent and the median was 0.4 percent.

- **Group 2:** 27 percent of participating advertisers where MFA ad spending was over 2 percent. This group had an average MFA ad spend of 13 percent and the median was 8 percent.

The 2023 study found an average of 15 percent of total ad spending was invested in MFA. In this context and following heavy press coverage of the issue of MFA, advertisers looked to take on greater stewardship in this area. Reasons behind this apparent reduction might include:

- The increase in tools to identify MFA provided by ad verification companies

- Increased use of MFA detection lists provided by third-party vendors, including agencies

MFA share of spending was generated using the most recently available data from deepsee.io.

**Total % of Ad Spending Served on MFA Websites**
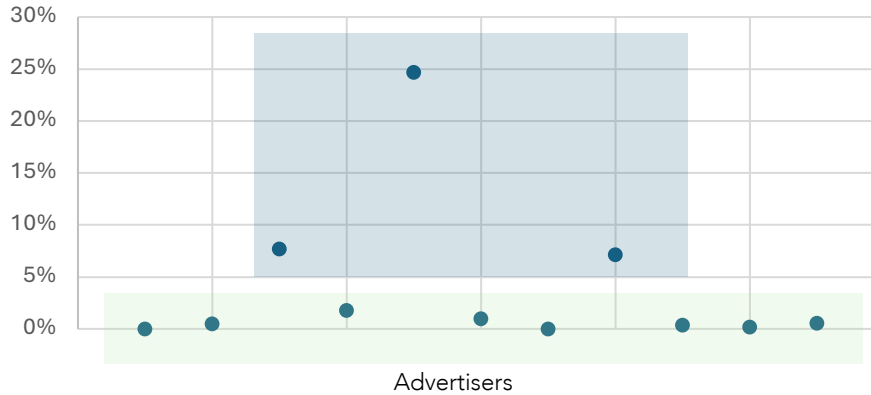
Finding 2: Drop in Number of Domains

The average number of domains and apps on which campaigns appeared was 23,000, with a median of 22,000. This compares to an average of 44,000 in the 2023 study.

There were two distinct advertiser segments:

- **Group 1:** 45 percent of advertisers served on an average of under 10,000 publisher domains and apps. This group had an average of 4,903 and a median of 5,589.

- **Group 2:** 55 percent of advertisers served on an average of over 10,000 publisher domains and apps. This group had an average of 37,654 and a median of 34,265.

Total Number of Unique Websites and Apps
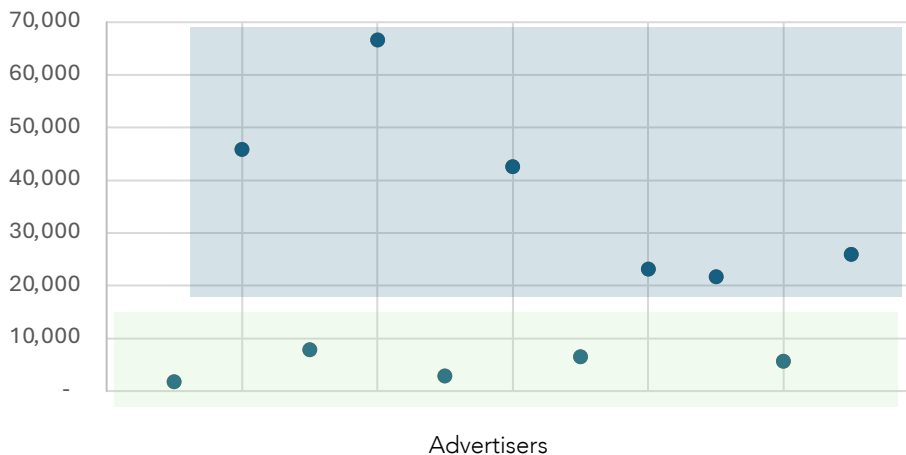
Finding 3: More Advertisers Focusing on Lower Number of Supply Partners

The 2023 study found the average number of SSPs and Exchanges used by advertisers was 19. This figure remained the same in these early Benchmark findings; however, the median value was 14. Again, there were two distinct groups of advertisers.

- **Group 1:** 73 percent of advertisers used under 20 SSPs and Exchanges. This group has both an average and a median of 12.

- **Group 2:** 27 percent of advertisers used over 20 SSPs and Exchanges. This group has both an average and a median of 39.

These findings suggest that more advertisers are focusing on selected, smaller numbers of SSP and exchange partners, yet many advertisers could do more work on SSP optimization.

Total Number of Unique SSP Exchanges

Advertisers
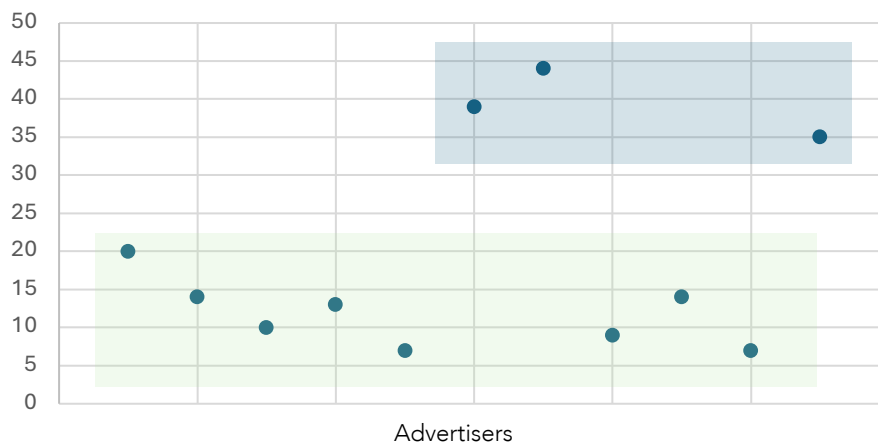
The industry is making progress. Again, there is a $22 billion opportunity here.

For more information contact:

Bill Duggan, ANA, bduggan@ana.net

Julie Weitzner, ANA, jweitzner@ana.net

Mike Zaneis, TAG TrustNet, mike@tagtoday.net

Tim Brown, Fiducia, tim.brown@fiducia.eco