

DiGiTL

THE E-COMMERCE DATA GAP

A STUDY ON TRACKING MATURITY

Uncovering the competitive landscape of E-Commerce tracking in the DACH market

CASE STUDY INCLUDED

“The **43%** Conversion Lift”



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INTRODUCTION

Behind the Numbers: Why We Conducted This Study

At Digitl, we are happy to guide a lot of clients through the complexities of digital analytics. Time and again, we've seen the incredible impact of a well-implemented, Server-Side Tagging (SST) setup. It's not just a technical upgrade; it's a strategic advantage that we've watched help businesses firsthand.

But this got us wondering: what's the bigger picture? Beyond our clients, how are other companies truly handling their tracking? To answer this, we embarked on a little journey to understand the wider landscape. We focused our study on the e-commerce industry in the DACH region – a sector that lives and breathes on data analysis. We believed this would give us a crystal-clear view into the current state of tracking.

What we found was both surprising and revealing: a significant gap in the adoption of professional, modern tracking setups.

This gap isn't just a technical oversight; it's a missed opportunity for growth, resilience, and a deeper understanding of customer behavior.

In the following pages, we'll share everything we discovered, including a detailed case study that shows exactly what one of our clients was able to achieve by closing this very gap.

We hope you find this work as insightful as we do and that it inspires you to take control of your data and unlock your full potential.



TIMO ADEN

Co-Founder

timo@digitl.com



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

5 Things You Will Learn From This



1. GA is Standard

Over 70 % of the biggest DACH E-Commerce businesses use Google Analytics. While this is a great start, relying on a basic setup leaves significant potential for data quality and enrichment untapped.



2. Control is Lacking

A significant number of businesses using GA have not adopted Google Tag Manager. This creates a management gap, leading to inefficient workflows and a lack of centralized control over their tracking landscape.



3. The SST Gap

Only 1 in 4 companies with GTM have adopted Server-Side Tagging (SST). This reveals a critical maturity gap, leaving the majority unprepared for privacy changes and significant signal loss.



4. Lead, Don't Follow

The market's low SST adoption is a clear opportunity. A modern, server-side data architecture provides a decisive competitive advantage through superior data control and measurement resilience.



5. Real Results

By moving to SST with Digitl, a global travel platform recovered up to 43 % more conversions and enabled real-time profit bidding. It is proof that a modern setup delivers tangible business growth and AI readiness.

STUDY: THE E-COMMERCE DATA GAP

Our research reveals a clear analytics maturity funnel in the DACH market. While most have basic tracking setups, the path to a truly modern setup narrows dramatically. This sharp drop-off shows where most businesses stop, and where the real competitive advantage begins.

Methodology

Our analysis is based on a technical review of the websites of 418 leading E-Commerce companies in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland.

We examined each website by analyzing its network requests to identify the implemented tracking technologies.

Specifically, we looked for:

Google Analytics (GA): Presence of a gtag/js request URL.

Google Tag Manager (GTM): Presence of a gtm.js request URL.

Server-Side Tagging (SST): Evidence from a server-side collect request URL running on a custom domain.

This methodology enabled us to determine the adoption rates of these crucial technologies within our sample, primarily focusing on the Google ecosystem.

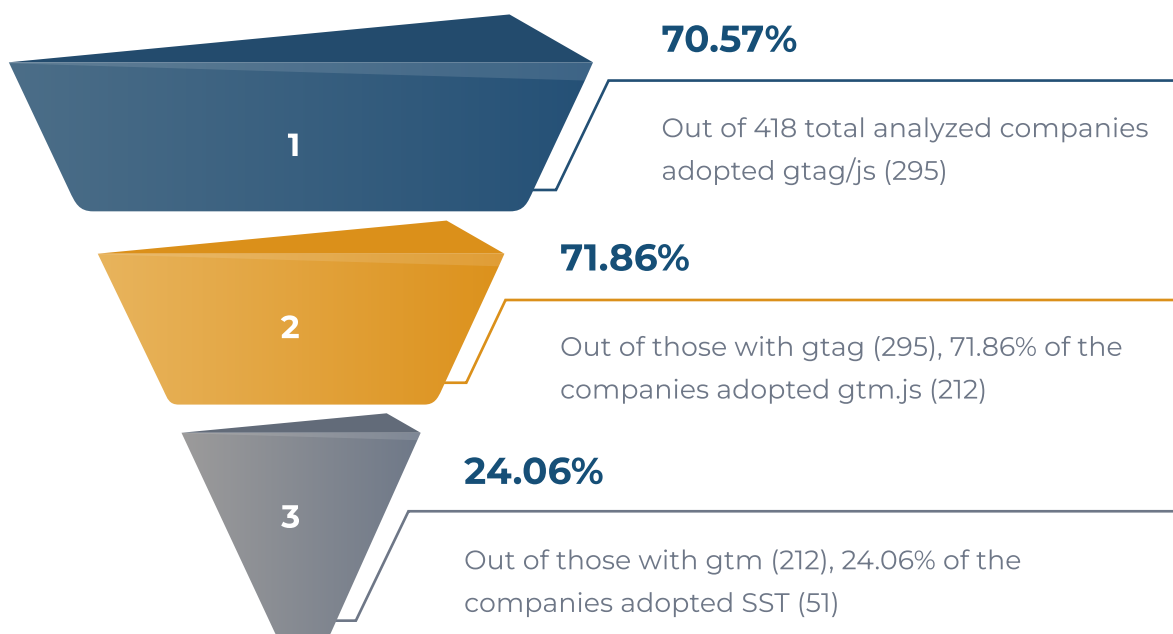
The analysis did not focus on non-Google products such as Adobe or Tealium.

Key Findings

Google Analytics (GA) is the dominant web analysis tool: With a high prevalence of 70.57% Google Analytics is the most widely used tool in the sample.

Google Tag Manager (GTM) is not yet a universal standard: Out of those GA users, a slight majority of 71.86% also use GTM as their central tool for managing tracking codes.

Server-Side Tagging (SST) remains an unorthodox method: Despite the recognized advantages of a server-side setup, only 24.06% of companies utilizing GA and GTM have adopted SST as well.



Tracking Maturity Funnel: This is how data can get lost through outdated setups.

WHY TRACKING MATTERS

The High Cost of Outdated Tracking

The data of our study shows that three out of four companies are operating with a tracking infrastructure that is not future-proof. This isn't just a technical deficit; it's a significant business liability with tangible costs. Being part of this majority means facing three critical challenges every day:

THE SIGNAL LOSS PROBLEM



Signal Loss: The Data You Don't See

Without Server-Side Tagging, you operate with a blind spot. Browser restrictions and short-lived cookies mean valuable conversion data is lost forever. This creates significant gaps in your measurement, just as our client experienced, leaving you with an incomplete view of actual user behavior.

THE ATTRIBUTION PROBLEM



Unreliable Attribution: Guesswork, Not Growth

When you can't see the full user journey, you can't assign credit where it's due. This turns your marketing attribution into guesswork. You risk over-investing in underperforming channels and cutting budget from your true top performers. It's not just bad data; it's wasted marketing spend.

THE INTELLIGENCE PROBLEM



Starving the AI: Handicapping Your Biggest Asset

Google's AI is the most powerful tool in your marketing arsenal, but it feeds on data. Incomplete or delayed data starves this engine. You're paying for a powerful engine but only giving it low-quality fuel.



A LOT TO GAIN WITH SERVER-SIDE TAGGING

As you will see in the case study with our client on page 9, server-side tagging offers new opportunities to analyze conversions and user behavior accurately and securely, significantly improve data quality, and thereby enhance marketing efficiency, ultimately achieving a competitive advantage.

ENHANCED DATA PRIVACY & CONTROL

Server-side tagging provides more control over user data. Companies can decide what information is sent to third-party providers, which helps complying with regulations like GDPR. This approach gives back full control over the data flow, ensuring data protection and transparency.

IMPROVED DATA QUALITY

Server-side tagging ensures data is clean and accurate from the start. This improved quality gives you a competitive advantage, leading to more effective campaigns and smarter business decisions.

INCREASED PERFORMANCE & SPEED

Moving tracking to the server reduces the amount of code that needs to load in a user's browser. This improves website loading speed and the overall user experience, which can positively influence search engine rankings.

STRATEGIC DATA ENRICHMENT

With server-side tagging, companies can enrich their data with additional backend information before it is sent to third parties. This allows for more advanced strategies, such as value-based bidding in Google Ads, which can significantly improve campaign performance and marketing efficiency.

THE SOLUTION

How to Close Your Data Gap

The significant low adoption of Server-Side Tagging indicates that a huge segment of the market is yet to align for the future of advanced privacy-centric data collection.

This presents an opportunity for companies to enhance their current setup.

For businesses looking to close this maturity gap and future-proof their data infrastructure, we recommend considering the following next steps:

1. Perform an Analytics Maturity Audit:

Start with a comprehensive audit to understand your current GTM, GA, and SST setup, identifying specific areas for improvement and a roadmap for a more robust architecture.

2. Implement Google Tag Gateway:

As the latest evolution in tag management, Google Tag Gateway is an essential component for any modern Server-Side Tagging setup. This ensures data is handled with greater control and privacy compliance.

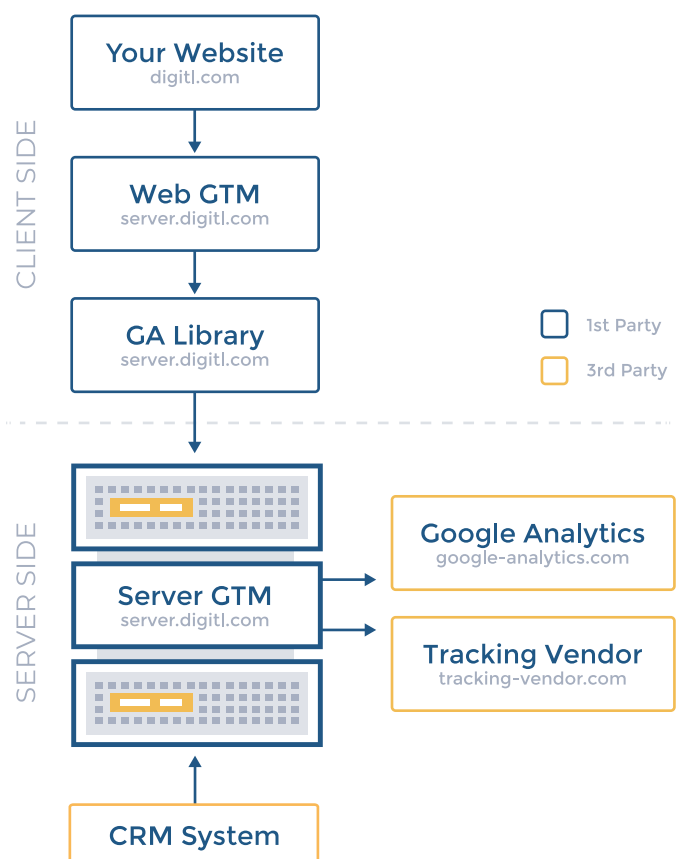
3. Consider GTM as a Service:

For companies lacking the internal resources or expertise, using GTM as a service provides a managed solution for maintaining a clean, efficient, and up-to-date tracking environment.

RECAP: HOW DOES SERVER-SIDE TAGGING WORK?

Traditionally, tracking is done in the web browser: client-side. Tags and pixels are embedded directly into the source code of the website – both the Google Analytics pixel and all other marketing tags. As soon as a user visits a page in their browser, these code snippets communicate with the corresponding tools – Google Analytics, Facebook/Meta, etc.

Server-Side Tagging shifts data collection from the user's browser to a server, which is usually managed by the website operator. The tracking code is not executed directly in the browser, as was previously the case, but the data is first sent to a separate server, which acts as an intermediary. This data can then be sent from there to various marketing tools such as Google Analytics, Facebook Pixel, or others.



TRAVEL PLATFORM BOOSTS PERFORMANCE WITH sGTM AND FIRST-PARTY DATA

99,7%

Faster profit signal to Google AI bidding

15%

Recovered conversions in Google Search with Enhanced Conversions

43%

Recovered conversions in YouTube with Enhanced Conversions

THE CHALLENGE

Our customer, a global travel platform, faced significant challenges with its previous measurement setup, which heavily relied on offline conversion import. This method proved to be less durable, creating limitations and data gaps in its Google marketing measurement. The AI powered Google marketing performance of the company could not reach its full potential.

THE APPROACH

In partnership with Digitl, the client implemented server-side Google Tag Manager via Cloud Run. The integration of Google Tag Gateway enabled first-party data collection across devices, reduced reliance on client-side tracking, and mitigated issues caused by short-lived cookies. Enhanced Conversions were activated to recover lost conversions by securely transmitting hashed customer data to Google Ads. To replace their offline import setup, the client & Digitl co-developed a custom server-side logic to calculate profit in real time. The approach combines components such as ticket price, commissions, and fees for more accurate and timely conversion enrichment.

THE RESULTS

The travel platform now tracks the true business impact of campaigns with greater accuracy and increased speed. The team moved from a 24h delay to real-time profit-based bidding. The server-side setup with Enhanced Conversions ensure more complete data and robust attribution. Up to 15% more conversions in Search and 43% in YouTube were recovered. Real-time, profit-based tracking enables sharper decisions and smarter budget allocation. More measured data points fuel Google AI for a more efficient media performance.



YOUR PATH TO MODERN MEASUREMENT

Certified Technology Solutions By Digitl

With today's evolving browsers and user settings, capturing a complete picture of customer interactions can be challenging. Server-side tracking centralizes your data collection, helping you gather the accurate information needed to see the full picture and make smarter business decisions.

THE QUICK-START: GOOGLE TAG GATEWAY

A simplified way to serve Google tags from your domain.

- » Quickly makes tracking more resilient to ITP and blockers.
- » Boosts data signals with minimal technical overhead.
- » The perfect first step into the server-side ecosystem.

THE POWERHOUSE: SERVER-SIDE GTM (SGTM)

Runs Google tags on your server for more control and accuracy.

- » Recovers lost data with maximum accuracy.
- » Enables data enrichment (e.g., with CRM data).
- » Ensures full data governance and GDPR compliance.

DIGITL: YOUR SUCCESS PARTNER

Having the right tools is just the start.

We work closely with you to design the perfect server-side strategy that fits your existing tech stack, whether it's on Google Cloud, Amazon Web Services, or Azure. Our experts then handle the seamless technical setup, building in best practices for performance and security right from the start. Together, we'll turn your data into clearer insights and a decisive marketing advantage.

CONTACT US

We are happy to show you how Server-Side Tagging can specifically work for you.



DR. TIM HASENPUSCH

Managing Partner

tim@digitl.com



“So much of the digital marketing world has been built on a data foundation that is becoming less and less reliable. Server-Side Tagging is about taking back control. It’s a strategic shift that allows our clients to build their own stable, accurate source of truth, ensuring that every decision they make is based on data they can trust, today and into the future.”

WHY DIGITL?

Digitl as Certified Partner

As a trusted MarTech, AdTech, and certified Google Cloud Services partner, Digitl provides direct access to Google's latest innovations and industry best practices.

The team of senior experts in Digital Analytics, Ad Technology, and Cloud Services provides state-of-the-art knowledge and professional implementation. Digitl is unique as a provider of GMP licenses and consultants who are not dependent on any publisher network. This strong partnership with Google allows us to help businesses navigate digital complexities and unlock the full potential of their marketing technology stack.



Google Marketing Platform
Sales Partner



Google Cloud
SPECIALIZATION
Marketing Analytics



Google Marketing Platform
Certified



Meridian
Certified Partner

E-COMMERCE WEBSITES DACH AS PART OF THE STUDY

The insights within this study are based on a detailed technical analysis of the following leading e-commerce websites* from across the DACH region.

thomann.de	sportissimi.de	derhandwerksmeister.com	kvm-switch.de
takkt.de	baer-schuhe.de	kreativ-offensive.de	kofferworld.de
baur.de	heute-wohnen.de	naturagart.de	wunderwunsch.de
qvc.de	wolkdirekt.com	gepps.de	kokku-online.de
aboutyou.de	leslunes.de	angelplatz.de	meinspiel.de
rimowa.de	rockanutrition.de	intercom-it.de	brands-club.com
bader.de	hisert.de	sneakerpeeker.de	wuffs-best.com
home24.de	de.tvshop.com	textilwerk.com	babysbestfood.com
ottoversand.at	at.tvshop.com	verticalextrême.de	horseven.com
universal.at	ch.tvshop.com	knerst.com	kokott.com
quelle.de	shop4runners.com	dogsworld.at	timemaster.de
lascana.at	sportwerk.com	ribelli.de	les-visionnaires.com
ackermann.ch	paligo.de	embassy-sports.com	doyoursports.de
jelmoli-shop.ch	moebelando.de	wecycle.de	eurogreens.de
limango.de	onergys.de	keba.com/emobility	flotter-dampfer.de
babymarkt.de	zologo.de	bio-stefan.at	homebyhome.de
rebuy.de	kitaekauf.de	ranger-shop.de	nordwolle.com
at.personalshop.com	mcgarden24.de	koelle-zoo.de	bolterwagen.com
office-partner.de	moluna.de	marcoschreier.de	clubfashion24.de
eis.de	heimwerkertools.com	biozoyg.shop	stylefy.de
campingwagner.de	frogcoffee.de	aboutwater24.com	tabak1a.de
elektroshopwagner.de	kavalio.de	holzmannshop24.de	bodenversand24.de
wolt.com	warehouse-one.de	ideal-pack-foodsolutions.de	ms-beschlaege.de
galaxus.de	autoteile-immmler.com	meets-ecommerce.de	waschies.com
spreadshirt.de	berlinbottle.de	licargo.de	oase-wassergarten.de
vitafy.de	autoteile-werkzeuge.de	handingo.de	zen-vape.de
almdudler.com/de-DE	luamaya.com	bio-kinder.de	litfass-buecher.buchkatalog.de
knuspr.de	ladenbau.de	bbi-trade.de	oblique-unique.com
buttINETTE.de	weg-ist-weg.com	hoehenpass.de	deinestadt klebt.de
connox.de	panorama24.eu	promobo.de	elcotec-electronic.de
korodrogerie.de	terd.de	lampenonline.de	nyfter.com
bandel-online.de	electronicx.de	docsave.com	neolymp.com
relaxdays.de	prestigetickets.de	prestije.de	kerzenprofi.de
aaa-internetshops.de	multipliyapparel.de	nethinks.com	design-heizungen.de
pearl.de	wall-art.de	mode-wolf.de	shop.primax.de
brillen.de	ranzenfee-koffertroll.de	mojawa.de	velo loft.de
oskar-store.de	vikingdirekt.at	house-attack.de	kushel.de
manufactum.de	liketransport.de	fischer-lahr.de	ventano-beschlaege.de
sport-thieme.de	innenrollo.de	oleio.de	lumiere-design.de
tink.de	shkshop.com	holzbrx.de	groenenberg-coffee.de
bett1.de	vapor-handel.de	lueftungsmarkt.de	arrowforge.de
juskys.de	purish.com	boerner.de	maschenfein.de
yves-rocher.de	nanobike.de	hiw24.de	paintersisters-neuss.de
fc-moto.de	zimeo.de	sls-profishop.de	unzerbrechbar.de
hessnatur.com/de	gate-to-the-games.de	favelaclothing.com	tro.net
porsche.at	brands4pets.de	volutionsports.com	magno-sphere.de
media-concept.com	abc-dental-care.de	teppichversand24.de	highlight-led.de
channel21.de	keimling.de	elektronetshop.de	liketransport.de
oppermann.de	franzose.de	luxentu.de	allcop-store.de
orion.de	handelskoenig.com	hanfgarten.at	hellomini.de
wardow.com	prepmymeal.de	bodyip-nutrition.de	sonnensegel-guru.de
outfittery.de	urbandrinks.de	dtsshop.de	cs-multimedia.de
home-deluxe-gmbh.de	motocaddygolf.de	redstar24.de	peruecken24.de
refurbed.at	lomado.de	badfabrik24.de	universitea.de
gurkerl.at	fusskleidung.de	smart-engineered.com	das-kostuemland.de
snocks.com	vampirevape.de	biber.com	lenox-kg.de
calida.com	waermebild24.com	taf-industriesysteme.de	kraehe.de
sheego.de	csp-shop.de	steg-platten.de	industrymall.de
def-shop.com	rocket-tools.de	onlineshop-baumarkt.de	neona.store
livefastdieyoung.de	swing2sleep.de	monster.tech	sanquell.de
conrad.at	zup24.de	fliesenrabatte.de	lkw-spanngurte.de
lifefitness.de	huber-bodywear.com	led-martin.de	letterbox24.de
hanwag.de	eu.xouxou.com	grillheaven.at	tradefit-shop.de
mpb.com	steffensmeier.de	merchsekai.de	teknoraks.de
juwelo.tv	maxsel.de	pflanzwerk.de	mooitzen.de
outfitter.de	spreadshirt.de	myvesperbox.de	schnell-und-sicher-
horze.de	smileypack.de	liketransport.de	handelskontor.de
shop24direct.de	druckerpatronen.de	christopeit-sport.com	gartendekoparadies.de
gartenmoebel.de	wassersporteuropa.de	finzelunschuck.de	berkemeier-homecompany.de
shop-lieckipedia.de	pharmacare.de	freeeway.com	candy2go.de
x-kom.de	whooki.de	wolfgang.de	jalousstore.de
jeans-direct.de	true-nature.bio	apiando.com	studibuch.de
isoled.at	allesverfuegbar.de	systemtreff.de	cowboystiefel-shop.de
cybex-online.com	hulle24.de	haka.com	holz-brueder.de

*This is a selection of the over 400 companies analyzed in this study, compiled from different online sources.

Digitl

IMPRINT

Digitl GmbH
An der Alster 6
20099 Hamburg
Germany

Represented by:
Timo Aden
Lennart Paulsen
Marco Schierhorn

Email:
info@digitl.com

Website:
www.digitl.com

Company Registration Number (Handelsregisternummer):
HRB 173448

VAT Identification Number (USt-IdNr.):
DE351862346

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