



Why Enterprise Marketing Strategies Need to Rethink Tagging & Cookies





Table of Contents



Introduction

1

The Problem with Tagging

2

What You Need to Know About Cookies

5

Solutions for Today's Marketers

7

Why Celebrus

10



Introduction

Are you spending your time wrestling with your data, trying to make sure it's accurate? Or would you prefer building personalized experiences for your customers, improving return on ad spend (ROAS), and increasing conversions? It's an obvious choice. And yet, many companies are spending up to millions of dollars a year trying to access their data. Or are missing out on opportunities because they are unable to adapt to an evolving digital landscape where growing privacy concerns are rendering third-party data capture as outdated.

Quality data is the cornerstone of an effective customer engagement and marketing strategy. But 45% of marketers say that lack of data quality is a major challenge. Excessive tagging and third-party cookies are definite contributors to that lack of data quality. When it comes to your data you want it at your fingertips: ready to be analyzed and deployed to provide personalized experiences for your customers and positively affect your bottom line.

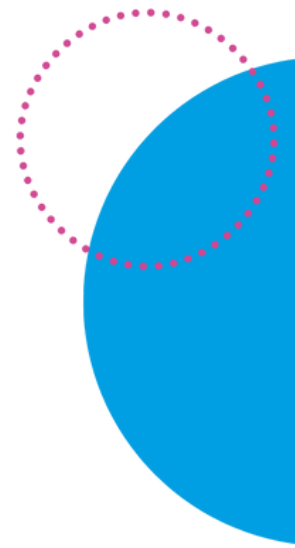
45%

OF MARKETERS CITE DATA QUALITY AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN DATA-DRIVEN MARKETING¹

Meaningful data-driven decision-making requires having processes and technologies in place for contextualized and comprehensive data capture that can inform strategic business decisions. Many companies depend on tagging with custom coding and third-party cookies for their data strategy but are missing crucial data by doing so.

¹ ZIPDO, "KEY DATA IN MARKETING STATISTICS: DRIVING SUCCESS AND REVENUE GROWTH" (EDUCATION REPORT 2024)

The problem with tagging




WHAT IS TAGGING?

Essentially a code snippet that's added to a URL to perform various functions, tags are used to enable data capture and tracking for users on your site and are commonly used as part of digital marketing and advertising efforts. Tags can be used for a wide array of activities across different channels including, but not limited to, saving user preferences (cookies), tracking website behavior and engagement, delivering personalized content, customization, data management, privacy and consent management, and attribution tracking.

DOES TAGGING WORK?

Not really. Typically, a “base tag” is added to a page as custom JavaScript, and then any event that needs to be tracked for how users are engaging with that webpage (what they click, type, etc.) requires its own code. Now imagine having myriad custom JavaScript codes to tag behavior across your website. Unsurprisingly, depending on excessive custom tagging is not only cumbersome, but leaves room for error and technical glitches. So, does tagging work? The better question: is your data being captured in a timely, easily accessible, accurate, and attributable manner? And is that process sustainable long-term?





Most companies have a tag management solution (TMS) where the bulk of tag-related actions will take place, with a new rule needing to be built in the TMS for any page that requires data capture. For each new rule there is custom code that stores what's captured into the data layer for that specific page. That set of code will associate with the pulled JSON objects, but because most TMS platforms don't like to "scrape" off a page, that data will likely have to populate into a data layer so that the TMS can get clean data.



What's a data layer

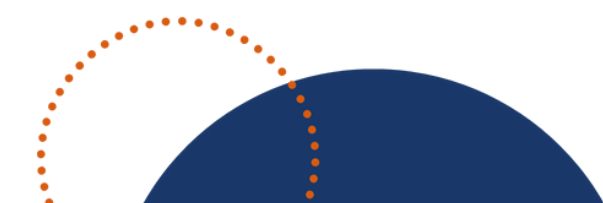
While technically a JSON (JavaScript Object Notation) object array with many (name,value) pairs stored, think of this like a data filing cabinet where every file (webpage) has to be managed separately in its own filing cabinet—a lot of work.

Because the data that is captured through tagging is simplistic—e.g., the behavior of something being clicked or typed which is then tied to objects pairs with no context—a lot of things can go wrong. If the object name changes, the page design changes, or something similar, then the code will break. The data layer will populate as the actions happen, but it's not instant. So if, for example, someone leaves the page before the data layer can populate, then the data won't be captured at all. This happens a lot with custom code. Consumers often move too quickly, which doesn't leave enough time for the data "hops" to happen.



Imagine having to plan and custom code for every action, interaction, or journey you want to capture on a website or mobile app. Not only do you have to have the forethought to prescriptively write custom code for the data you need (or will need in the future), but you also need to maintain that fragile architecture. This is why companies have spent hundreds of thousands, and in some cases millions, of dollars trying to keep the data pure each year—and still can't accurately track attribution for individual web visitors and/or often find themselves in a maintenance cycle. It's both a fool's errand and a waste of resources. To add to that, having so many different custom codes on different pages of a website not only clutters the site, but makes it harder to maintain and slows down page load time. With how complex today's websites and apps are, and the type of data you need to capture to deploy strategic decision-making and stay competitive, managing tagging is not a sustainable endeavor.

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What you need to know about cookies



WHAT ABOUT COOKIES?

Cookies are digital markers stored on users' devices that capture and store user preferences for different browsers, helping brands to provide personalized browsing experiences. The internet runs on cookies in many ways, so despite some claims, we are not entering a cookie-less future but rather one that is less accepting of third-party cookies. While cookies themselves aren't all "bad, cookies like third-party cookies are no longer considered "good." Capturing or sending data outside your networks raises significant concerns regarding data privacy and the protecting of the captured identifying customer information.

The deprecation of third-party cookies is mostly felt in advertising. Previously, most of the data used for programmatic buying, ad targeting, and more, were built off third-party cookies. The growing departure from third-party cookies means that those data pools aren't being contributed to anymore to any real degree, so the data is old, outdated, and incomplete. What's worse, that data is probably being lookalike modelled many times over in attempts to accommodate that lack of real- and live-time data.

Real-time data vs live-time data:

- **Real-time data:** information and website behavior that's been gathered in a timely matter that can help identify trends and patterns over time
- **Live-time data:** information that is captured instantly and processed in milliseconds so it's available for analysis as the activity is taking place

In today's current climate, first-party cookies are the answer, but it's important to remember that even then not all cookies (or third-party vendors) are created equal. The significance of being first-party forward is that any data captured—whether it's for users that are anonymous, known, or authenticated—is housed within the four walls of your business and not shared or processed externally. Thus, helping you store customer data in a secure environment and process the data within your own network for immediate data access.



Google reverses promise to deprecate third-party cookies, ignoring growing privacy concerns

And yet, despite growing consumer privacy concerns, many advertisers are still using third-party cookies. So much so that Google recently reversed its plan to remove cookies from Google Chrome. But the businesses still depending on third-party cookies as the primary source of insight into customer behavior are missing the mark. If marketers want to future-proof their business and build brand trust, they'll need to leverage technologies that can compliantly capture vast amounts of timely, accurate data, while complying with evolving data privacy regulations. A first-party data approach will be key.

It's also important to have the capabilities in place and work with vendors who can adhere to the strictest forms of GDPR and other global data privacy regulations. This includes being able to turn off identity and cookie captures when someone opts out of data tracking, but still have insights into journeys and behaviors for anonymous users, so that you can compliantly build better, and more personalized, user experiences for all website visitors.

Solutions for today's marketers



WHY YOU NEED TO OWN AND CONTROL YOUR DATA


As new data sharing protocols continue to evolve (clean rooms, data partnerships, etc.), staying aware will be critical for compliance, especially amidst stricter global data protection regulations. The best policy to protect your customers and your business is to keep things in-house:

1. Keep as much of your consumer data in-house in a true first-party manner (i.e., with systems that you own and control and single-tenant private cloud instances)
2. Only share the necessary data to get value and scrutinize and audit that data regularly
3. Centralize your digital data collection and move away from human-written tagging and JavaScript as that can run awry quite quickly, sending more data out of your network than you may even realize

The path is clear—own and control your data, capture it compliantly and without friction across your owned channels, and use that to build better experiences and find more consumers.

WHY YOU NEED TO GO TAG-FREE

The disadvantage of custom tagging is that when that tagging breaks, the data isn't collected at all. When an object or a webpage changes and the tagging breaks, you're missing and/or losing your data rather than it being captured and processed into the data model no matter what.



Tag-based data capture lacks detailed metadata to analyze trends or patterns over time, and can't perform more complex analysis, such as predictive modeling or machine learning, without supplemental data

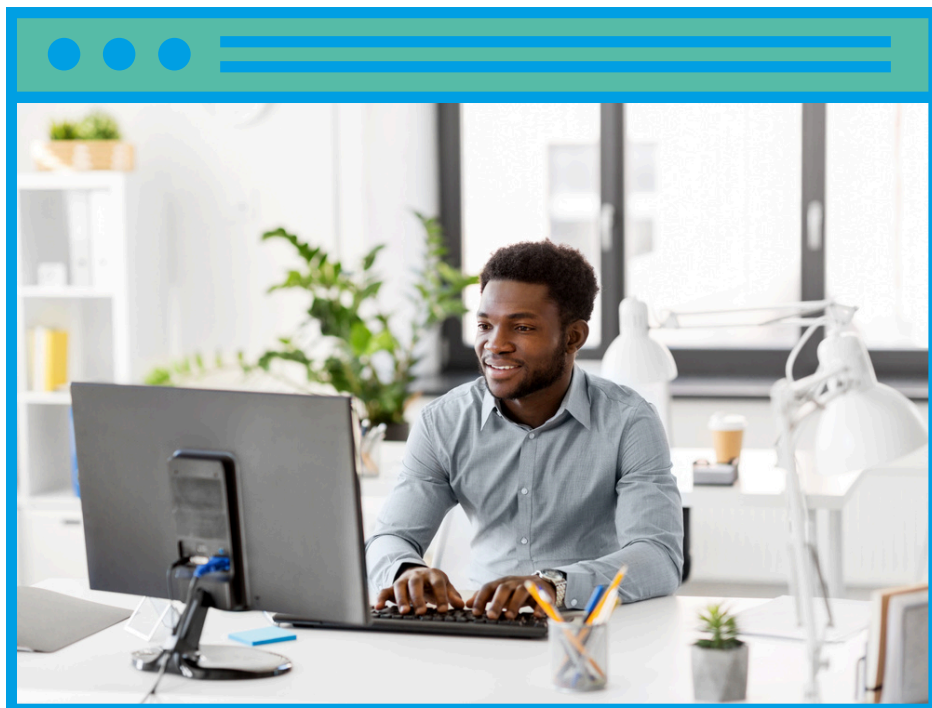
Custom coding and data layers lack structure. Meaning, you not only have to capture the data, but you also then have to try and define a structure and relation since there is no data model. When there is no data model and thus no structure or logical home for any data that is captured, it's no wonder companies are spending forever trying to make sense of their data.

The optimal way to capture data is to have a system in place that persists and resolves identities, both over time and in real time, to give you a 360-degree view of your website visitors when you want it. Tag-free technology that creates comprehensive digital identities by capturing and linking first-party data and webpage events (user visits and interactions) automatically across all touchpoints—sessions, channels, devices, and domains—will immediately and accurately give a unified view of each website visitor. Without getting blocked or restricted like third-party cookies would.

With a system that goes beyond only capturing a (name, value) pair, you have all the context you need automatically and in-house, so any rules and flows you create do not have to be solely dependent on the name of an object like it does with tagging. No depending on custom tagging that breaks or can't adjust to changes made to an object or page that leads to no data being collected at all. No processing of data externally and risking your customers' data. No hearing (or saying) “we didn't tag for that.”

NEVER AGAIN HEAR THE PHRASE “we didn’t tag for that”

The right system will enable your data capture to be deployed with a single line of code on web, mobile web, or in the model’s library in iOS and Android and won’t add to the strain on IT resources. Is that to say that a tag-free system won’t require some rules to be updated if an object changes? No. However, a system that has significantly lower time to configure and no coding required, makes it easier to set up your rules, use wizards and pre-built functions, and streamlines the process of managing and maintaining your systems and data. With that, updating rules is a simple task, no tagging or coding required, and more importantly, zero data is lost as a result of those updates. And, the data model can also be repopulated and reprocessed as needed to update downstream systems.



Why Celebrus



FRICTIONLESS DATA CAPTURE

The Celebrus platform collects granular, event-level data, including clickstreams, page views, form interactions, and more. It leverages live-time data capture techniques to ensure immediate data availability. Data can be captured, contextualized, and sent to another system or data warehouse in as few as 40 milliseconds. This allows for real-time use of data from personalization to fraud prevention.

SEAMLESS DATA TRANSFORMATION

Celebrus processes raw data into structured formats suitable for analysis and activation. This involves cleansing, enrichment, and contextualization to provide meaningful insights including sentiment. Powered by the data model, this means that digital data is usable in milliseconds and can be integrated with any system efficiently.

INSTANT DATA ACTIVATION

The captured and enriched data is then utilized for various purposes such as personalization, analytics, and marketing automation. Celebrus seamlessly integrates with CRM systems, marketing platforms, and other business applications.



Contact us

Contact Celebrus for the most complete view of your digital customer in the industry today, no tagging or third-party cookies required!



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