



POST-COOKIE QUESTIONS: HOW ADVERTISING STRATEGIES AND SENTIMENTS ARE EVOLVING

Survey results show how advertisers and publishers are preparing for a future without third-party cookies

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Foreword

As third-party cookie deprecation looms on the horizon, buyers and sellers alike have had another year to plan for the significant industry shift. Advertisers have plenty of questions about maintaining performance and measurement expectations. Meanwhile, publishers have questions about revenue, technology and operational changes that will impact their businesses. Around them, the rest of ad tech is shifting beneath their feet.

Some of the industry's biggest players have also adjusted their priorities. **Apple has held** firm to its line in the sand set in 2020 against third-party cookies through its Intelligent Tracing Prevention feature (ITP). Google has delayed their part of the process multiple times, with the latest cutoff date set for the second half of 2024. The rationale for this was summed up well by the VP of Google's "Privacy Sandbox" initiative, Anthony Chavez:

"The most consistent feedback we've received is the need for more time to evaluate and test the new Privacy Sandbox technologies before deprecating third-party cookies in Chrome," Chavez said **in a blog posted in July of 2022**. The "Privacy Sandbox" is Google's ongoing effort to create technology that is considerate of user privacy, but still allows digital businesses to earn revenue and keep the internet free for all.

This spirit of experimentation is one that's been shared by many within the industry as they find their own ways to move on from third-party cookies. The internet is changing, and the need is great for solutions that effectively respond to the demand for improved user protections while also ensuring that an ad-supported internet thrives in a privacy-conscious future.

But what do those solutions look like, and how has general sentiment changed since deprecation began? These are questions that DoubleVerify (DV) sought to answer in this report based on survey insights from advertisers and publishers.



A Light at the End of the Tunnel

Deprecation concerns are top-of-mind, but there are signs of progress and optimism.



The Potential for Collaboration

Buyers and sellers stand to benefit by working more closely together and striving to reach alignment.



The Role of First-Party Data

First-party data is in demand, but progress must be made in terms of trust and actionability.



Pay Attention to Attention

Attention-focused metrics are a hot topic on both the supply and the demand side

Methodology

This is DV's second edition of this post-cookie report, the first of which was released in early 2022. The respondents come from a wide array of industry backgrounds, from media buyers to ad operations specialists to executive leadership on both sides of the media transaction.



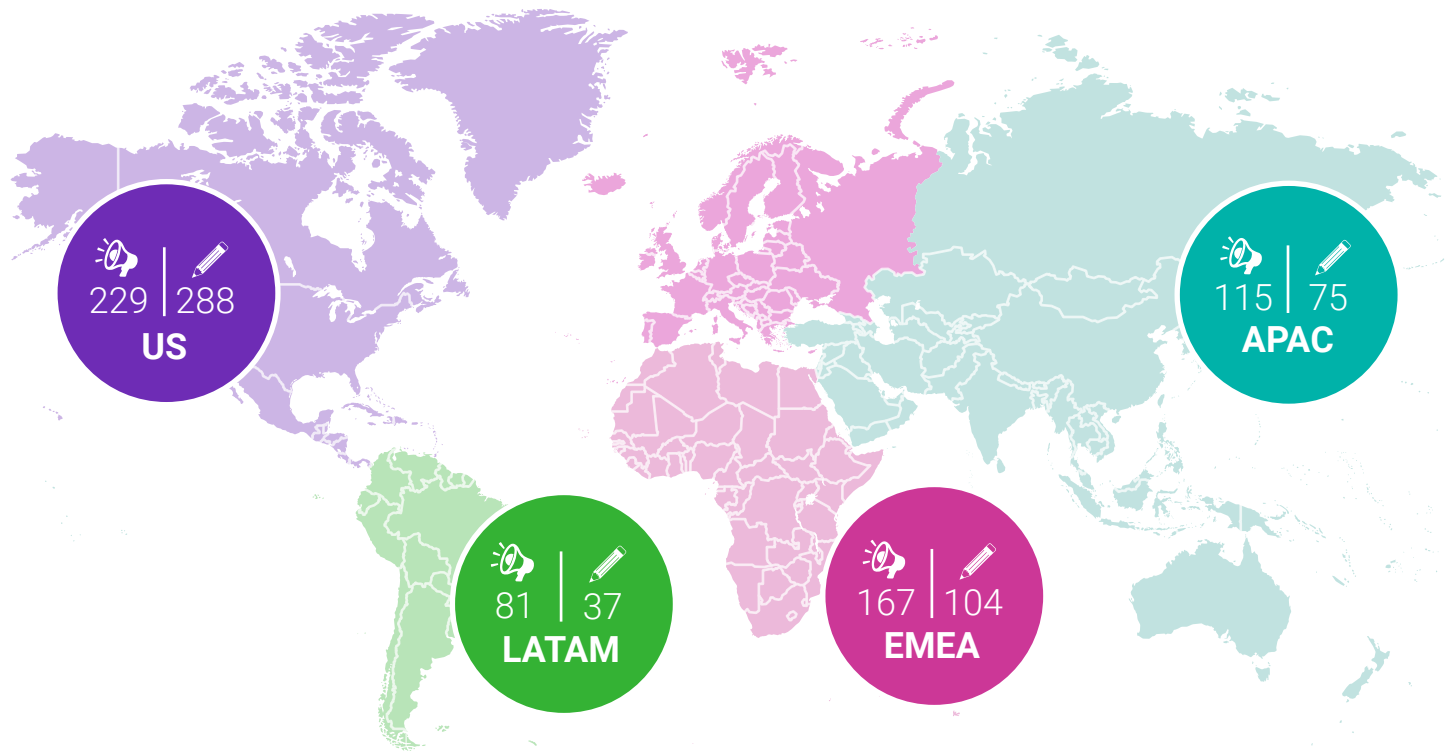
ADVERTISER

406 Respondents



PUBLISHER

404 Respondents



DV is using this data to track relevant industry trends in perception and action as the end of third-party cookies approaches. The survey was fielded by Pure Spectrum Research on DV's behalf.

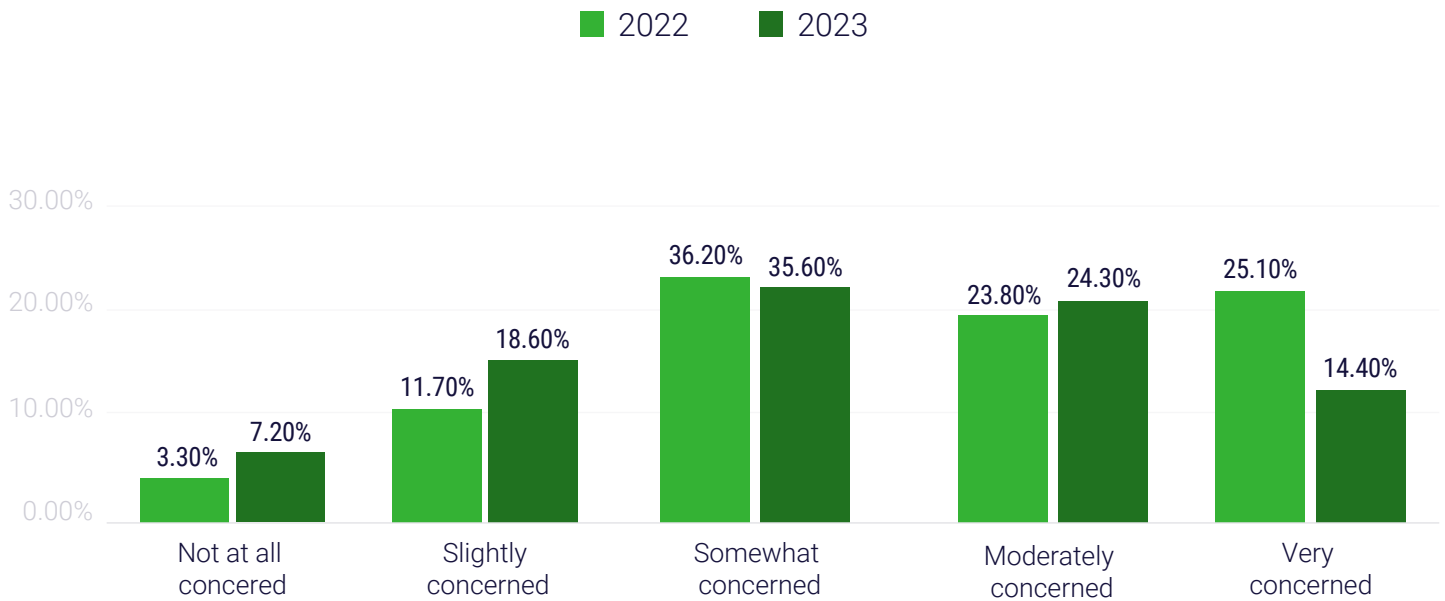
Deprecation Solutions Are Progressing

Concerns Remain High, but More Are Becoming Comfortable

Publishers remain concerned about the impact of cookie deprecation on their business year-over-year (YoY), with 59.9% of publisher respondents indicating they were either “somewhat concerned” or “moderately concerned.” However, those who said “very concerned” decreased by 42.6% YoY and those who said “not concerned” increased by more than double. These changes suggest that the industry is coming down to earth from the initial shock, and getting real about finding solutions.

PUBLISHER

How concerned are you about the impact of cookie deprecation and other privacy-related changes on your overall business?

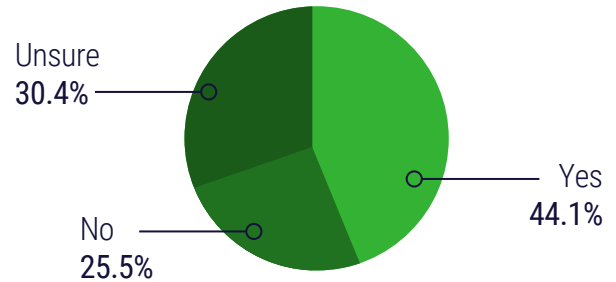


Concern exists on the buy side as well. Advertisers indicated that “multiple browsers phasing out third-party cookies” was their primary worry. This issue held the top spot in 2022, and increased from 38.5% to 45.1% in 2023, showing the high relevance of browser decisions as the industry prepares for cookie deprecation.

Much of the continued third-party cookie concern on both sides could be attributed to uncertainty around the most effective solutions and workflows. Only 24% of publishers stated they currently had a post-cookie solution in place. The remaining respondents were either still testing or hadn't yet begun the process. This corresponds with a strong feeling from buyers and sellers (47.8% and 44.1% respectively) that Google will issue another delay to the deprecation process ahead of its self-imposed 2024 deadline. It wouldn't be the first time they've done it, after all.

PUBLISHER

Do you think Google will delay cookie deprecation again?



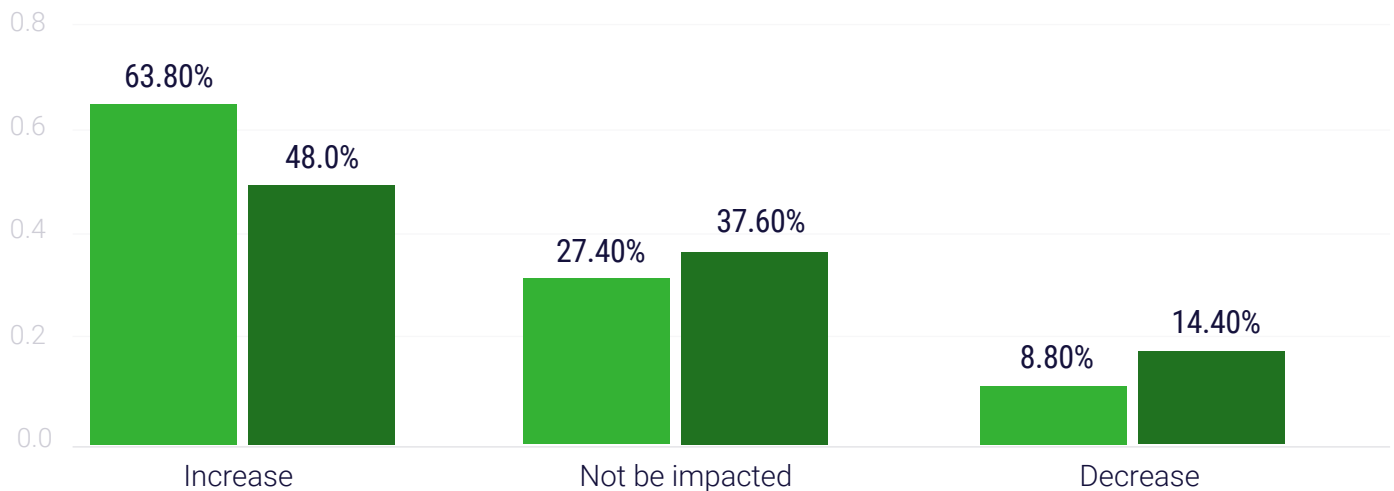
Top of Mind: Revenue Expectations and Addressability

One of the sharpest differences YoY was in publisher revenue expectations in a post-cookie world. In 2022, 63.8% of publishers thought their revenue would increase after third-party tracking ended, falling to 48% in 2023.

PUBLISHER

What do you anticipate will be the impact of cookie deprecation and other privacy-related changes on your revenue?

■ 2022 ■ 2023



ADVERTISER

Rank which issues are of greatest concern to you in a cookieless future?



30.5% of advertisers indicated that their ability to target audiences effectively was among their greatest concerns in a future without third-party cookies. First-party data stands to help publishers increase revenue while addressing advertiser targeting concerns. However, more work is needed to build advertiser trust in publisher first-party data sources. 49.8% of publishers believed that making data accessible in open-market environments will be one of the biggest challenges in scaling first-party and contextual data.

The upshot from this data is a strong support on either side for first-party data, both for their own and for each other's. But there is also a need for greater transparency, and improved storytelling from publishers that can improve advertiser trust in first-party data. It seems, despite the bilateral support, there is more work to be done before everyone can fully reap the benefits of a first-party data approach.

Improved positioning from publishers, supported by third-party quality metrics, can increase advertiser trust in first-party data sets.

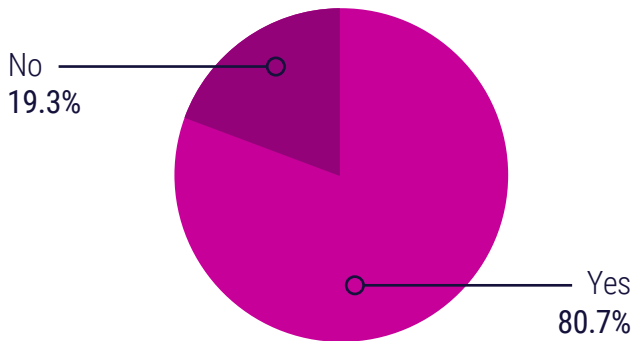
Buyers and Sellers Find Agreement and Misalignment

Industry Agrees on Rising Importance of Direct Partnerships

Among those surveyed, 81% of publishers believe that direct relationships will become more important once third-party cookies are deprecated. Furthermore, 83.7% of advertisers said they will only partner with publishers that have robust first-party data to share, which is often enabled through direct relationships.

PUBLISHER

Do you think direct advertiser to publisher relationships will become more important once cookies are deprecated?



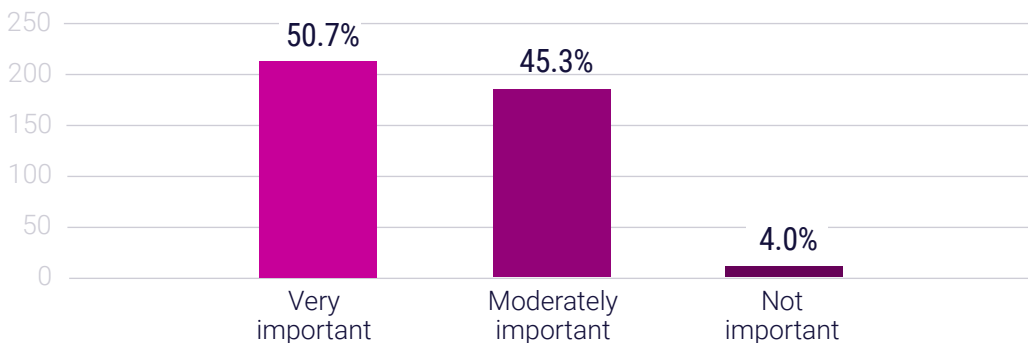
Mutual Interest Remains for Contextual Solutions

Contextual solutions are top-of-mind as the industry seeks privacy-forward methods to maximize scale and performance. This is supported by consumer experience and engagement in context-based advertising. DV’s 2022 report, [Four Fundamental Shifts in Advertising & Media](#) noted that 67% of consumers were more likely to pay attention to an ad if it was contextually relevant to their interests.

A commanding 96% of publishers surveyed think that contextual advertising capabilities will be important for their businesses in 2023. Additionally, 76% of them considered the quality of their contextual capabilities to be either “good” or “very good.”

PUBLISHER

How important will your contextual advertising capabilities be for your business in 2023?



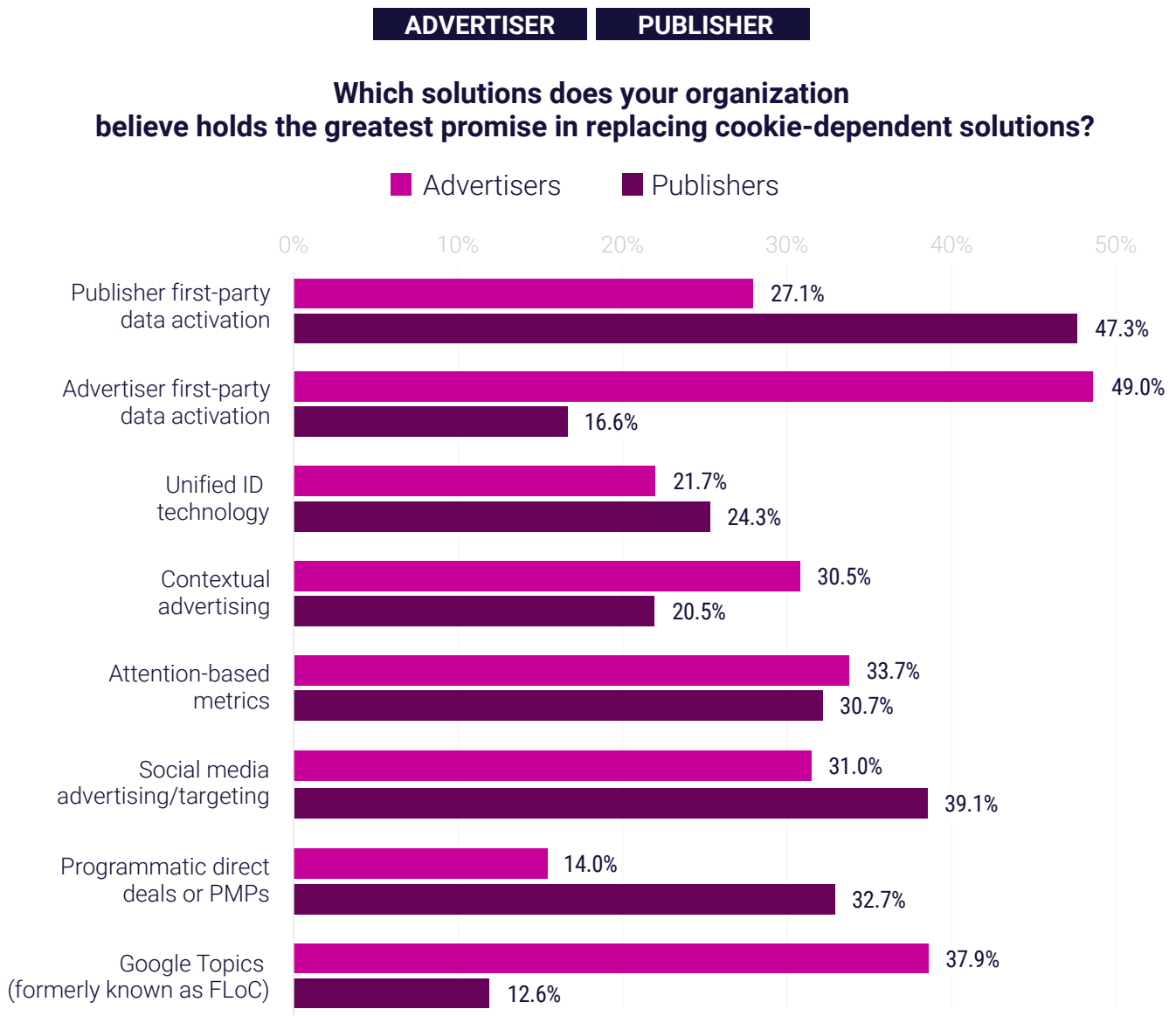
Similar positivity can be found on the buy-side. Contextual advertising jumped from 24% to 30.5% in positive advertiser sentiment as a solution that holds promise in replacing cookie-dependent solutions. In fact, 93.6% of advertiser respondents stated they were planning to rely on contextual advertising for at least some of their buys in 2023. In terms of marketplace expectations, 77.9% of them said the contextual advertising capabilities they've seen from publishers were either "good" or "very good." That's a 65% increase YoY in terms of advertiser sentiment.

93.6%

Of advertisers stated they were planning to rely on contextual advertising for some or most of their buys in 2023

Solution Misalignment Exists on Both Sides of the Industry

Despite signs of optimism, the survey highlighted areas of misalignment. When asked which solutions hold the greatest promise in replacing cookie-dependent advertising, responses were mixed. The biggest disparities were around confidence in Google's solutions, programmatic-direct deals and first-party data hierarchy.



Both Sides Vie for First-Party Data Supremacy

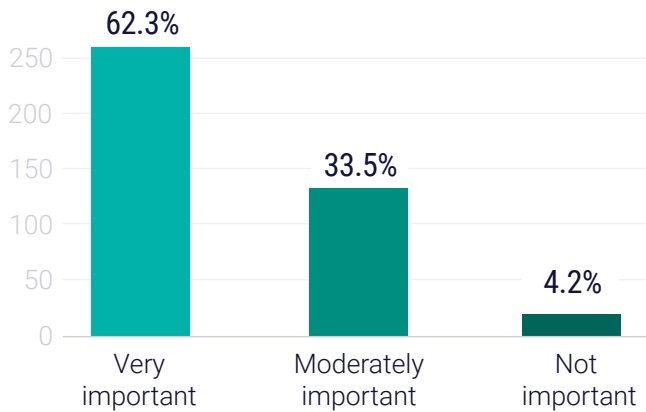
Brands Are Focused on Their Own First-Party Data Strategies

A new insight highlighted in the survey is the growth of advertiser first-party data. On the advertiser side, 62.3% of respondents indicated that their own first-party data is “very important,” a 59% increase from 2022. Additionally, nearly half of all advertisers surveyed cited their own first-party data activation as the cookie-independent solution that holds the most promise. This is a 97% increase from what respondents said in 2022.

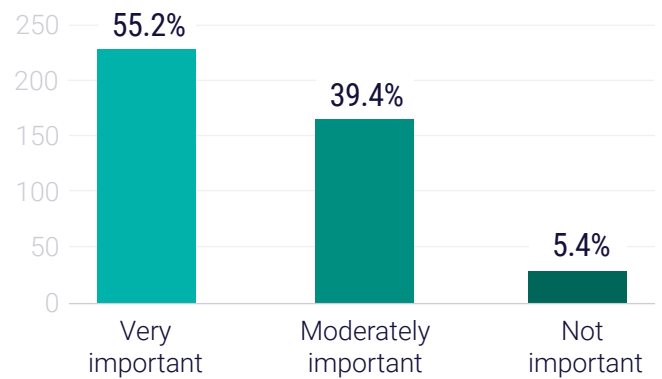
ADVERTISER

Advertiser Perception of First-Party Data

How important is your own first-party data moving forward?



How important is publisher first-party data moving forward?

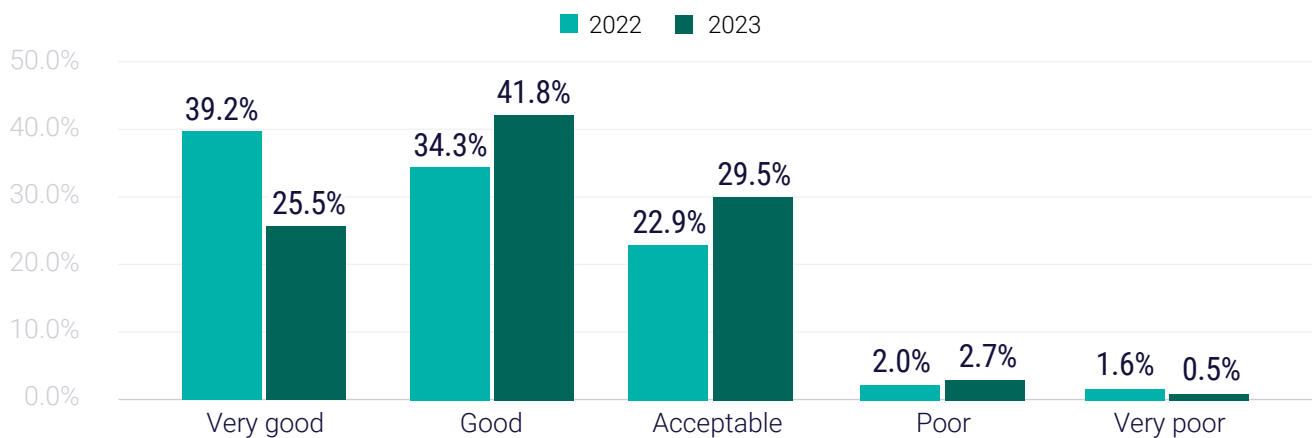


Publishers Strive to Improve First-Party Data Appeal and Activation

Meanwhile, publishers have been building up their first-party data offerings, attempting to make them more appealing to buyers. 73% of publishers are currently investing in first-party data collection strategies, with email marketing (54%) being the most common tool for growing first-party data sets.

PUBLISHER

Rate the quality of your own organization’s first-party data management and activation



While first-party data grows, confidence has fallen in terms of activation and management. Publishers that ranked their activation as “very good” fell by 35% YoY. While many of those respondents fell into the “good” or “acceptable” camp, the drop in confidence shows an opportunity for publishers to further develop strategies that build advertiser trust in their first-party data.

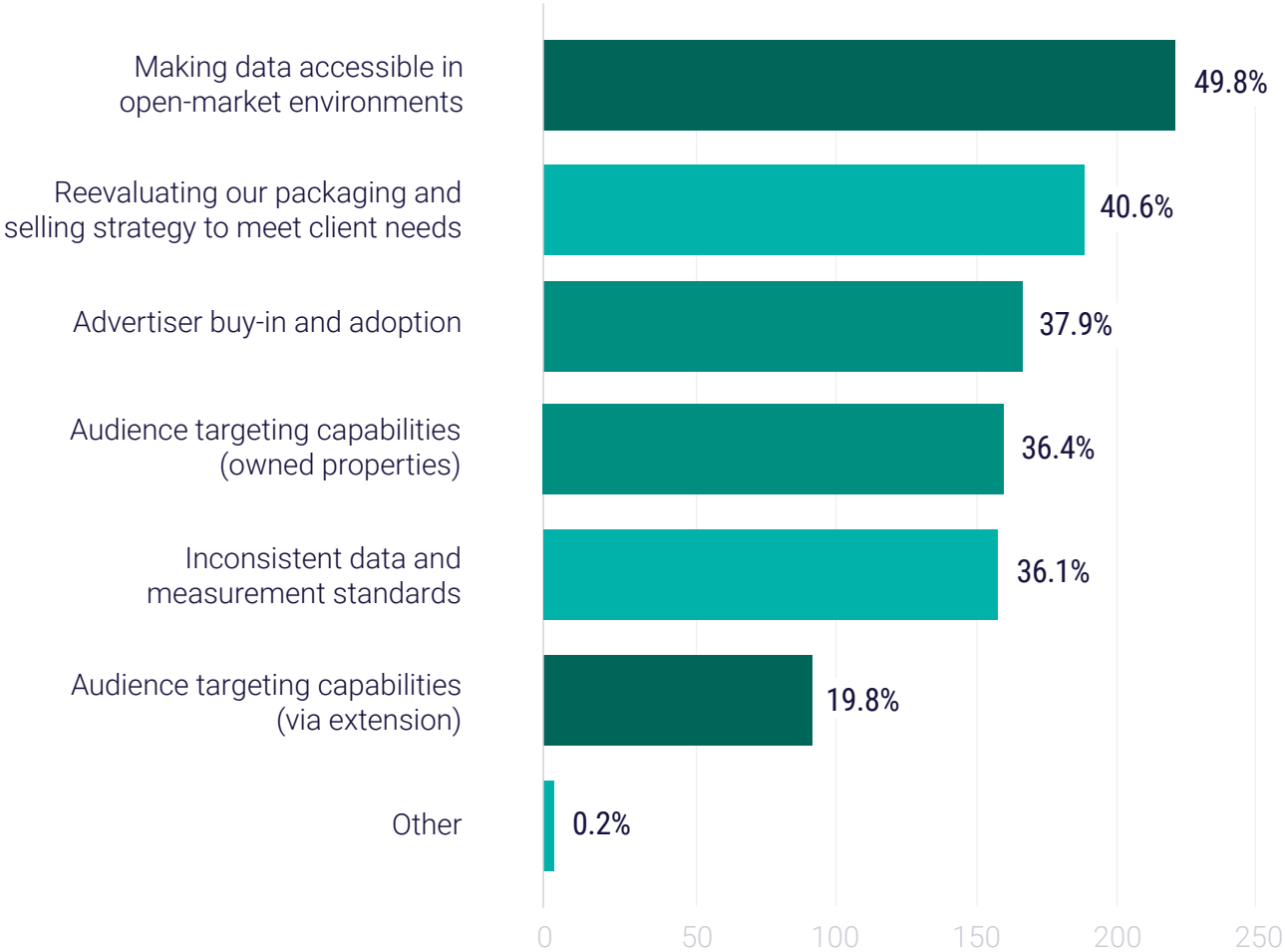
Opportunities for Third-Party Measurement to Build Trust in First-Party Data

Although they have a high outlook for their own data, advertisers indicated that publisher first-party data will also be a strong priority. 94.6% of advertisers stated that publisher first-party data will be either “very important” or “moderately important” moving forward. An overwhelming 83.7% of advertiser respondents stated that they “will only partner with publishers who have robust first-party data to share in support of a campaign.”

Third-party cookies may be going away, but third-party metrics will continue to be an important part of digital advertising transactions. Combining first-party data with third-party metrics related to context, brand suitability, viewability and attention can help publishers better position their offerings in the marketplace.

PUBLISHER

What do you think the biggest challenges will be with relying on first-party and contextual data?



Everyone Turns Towards Attention

Attention metrics look to be a key focus for brands and publishers in 2023, with both sides speaking to its potential as an advertising currency. When asked about the solutions that hold the greatest promise in replacing cookie-dependency, attention-based metrics came in 3rd for advertisers at 34%. Publishers echoed this sentiment with 30.7% of responses.

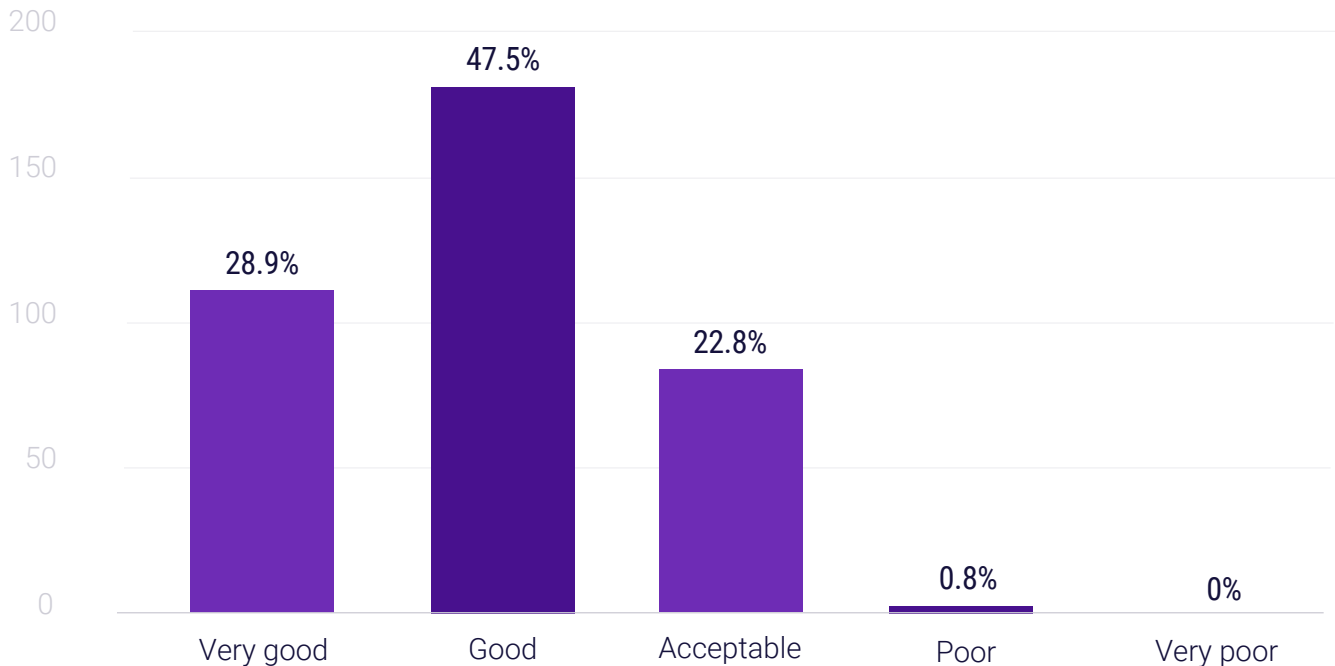
Publishers have already adapted to industry sentiment, with 94% of publishers describing attention as either “moderately important” or “very important” to their business this year. Those same publishers indicated confidence in their attention-based capabilities, with 77% of them stating commonly that their offering was either good or better.

94%

of publishers described attention-based capabilities as either “moderately important” or “very important” in 2023

PUBLISHER

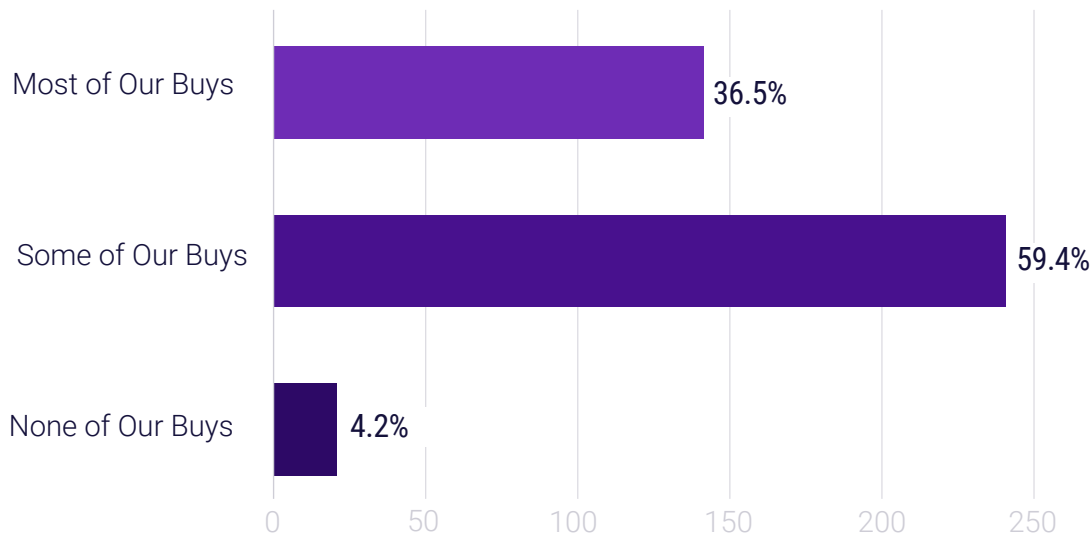
Rate the quality of your attention-based advertising capabilities



On the buy side, 96% of advertisers plan to rely on attention-based metrics in either most or some of their ad buys in 2023. While only 28% of advertisers ranked publisher attention-based offerings as “very good,” they seem satisfied overall with what they’re seeing in the marketplace.

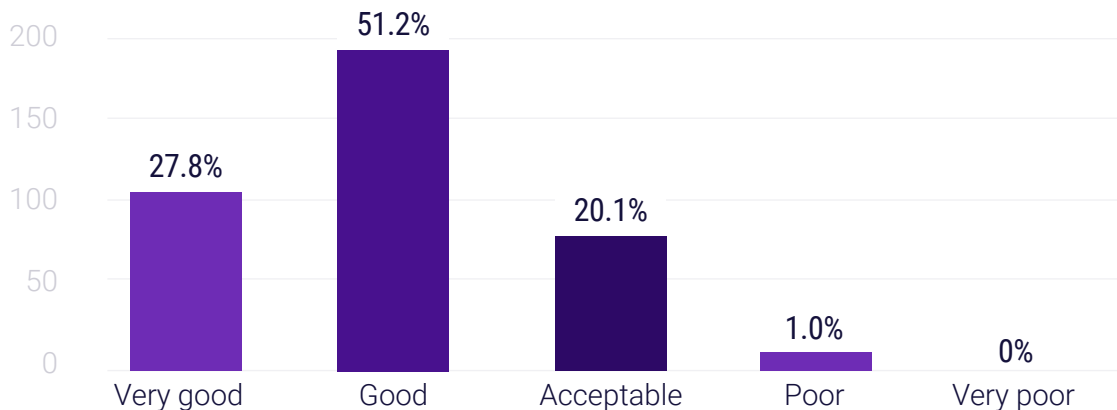
ADVERTISER

How much are you planning on relying on attention-based metrics in your media strategy in 2023? Attention metrics will be part of:



ADVERTISER

Rate the typical quality of the attention-based advertising capabilities you've seen from publishers within direct and premium programmatic deals



Balancing Contextual and Attention Use Cases

While interest in both contextual and attention-based advertising is on the rise, publishers must always consider what works best for their clients and business. Trusted third-party measurement for contextual and attention can allow publishers and brands to speak a common language on these topics in the marketplace.

Key Takeaways

The Post-Cookie Picture is Getting Clearer, Slowly

The imminent deprecation of third-party cookies has publishers and advertisers looking seriously for viable solutions. Luckily, both sides find agreement on topics such as contextual, attention and first-party data activation to find their way through. Consider also that any post-cookie solution requires trust and acceptance from both parties, which has proven challenging for publishers in terms of first-party data activation.

Enter a New Era of Publisher-Advertiser Cooperation

Opportunities are abundant for publishers and advertisers to align in new and impactful ways, and now is the time to cultivate direct partnerships. DV is proud to equip both sides of the industry with tools and services that foster a more transparent way of doing business. [Our Authentic Direct™](#), for example, provides a direct connection to deliver on campaigns based on any DV advertiser's brand suitability preferences, massively reducing incident and block rates through technological bridge-building.

Both Sides Must Pay Attention to Attention

Attention-based metrics rank highly as a solution for the loss of third-party cookies. The ability for these metrics to quantify ad performance accurately and meaningfully cannot be ignored as a privacy-friendly measurement and optimization tool. Publishers and advertisers should begin to explore how to transact on attention.

Establish Transparency and Trust with First-Party Data

While it's clear that first-party data will be coveted post-deprecation, the matter of whose will be more valuable is an ongoing discussion. Publishers can and should use third-party metrics like contextual, attention, brand suitability and more to bridge the gaps in first-party data trust and transparency. Eliminating data silos and analyzing first- and third-party metrics cohesively can help publishers grow their business.



Optimize Yield and Quality While Improving Publisher-Advertiser Alignment with DoubleVerify

DV offers powerful tools designed to help publishers and advertisers work better together. From [DV Pinnacle](#), our unified service and analytics platform that powers advertising campaigns, to [DV Publisher Suite](#), our comprehensive toolkit that helps publishers use data to optimize inventory value and maximize yield, DV is uniquely positioned to promote transparency, establish trust, and build valuable long-term relationships on both sides of the industry.



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