



CORVIDAE

By QueryClick

Marketing in the Cookieless Future

How the removal of third-party cookies will impact retail



Introduction

The decision by Google to end the use of third-party cookies in its Chrome browser has emerged as one of the key issues for retail marketers recently.

But how aware are they of the implications of the change?
And what types of solutions are they planning to put in place to minimise the impact on their marketing activity?

We decided to find out. And, in this survey, we took a 3-pronged approach to understanding:

→ **Their knowledge and preparation for the change**

Getting a feel for the current level of understanding around the looming impact of the removal of cookies within retail marketing, how the change is being viewed and current levels of preparation.

→ **A review of existing solutions**

How existing solutions are viewed by retail marketers and if they are making any changes to their existing MarTech stack - or considering new solutions.

→ **Life after cookies**

How retail marketers find optimising their current marketing activity outside of Google (as other browsers already remove third-party cookies). Plus, how they plan to optimise activity following the change.

So, what are the headline findings here?

Corvidae CEO, Chris Liversidge shares his thoughts...

What marketers know and how they are preparing in advance

That a resounding **97% of respondents are concerned about the loss of cookies having a material impact on their ability to understand which marketing activities are effective** - or even serve ads effectively - is perhaps unsurprising. Given that 60+% of the browser market is being taken out of play.

However, **73% are specifically concerned about measurement**. And, while finding a replacement for activating ad targeting (the focus of Google's replacement solutions - Topics and Protected Audience API) matters, the problem for marketers is broader than this.

Quite simply they don't have a home truth: a baseline against which to measure all marketing performance.

In our view, 2024 will be a watershed year for marketers.

Those who come equipped to deal with a cookieless world – and harness the power of AI-driven solutions – will thrive. And those who are not ready will struggle to achieve the same results they once did.

The fact that **79% of marketers believe that cookies are a technology that provides accurate tracking** is puzzling.

In an environment where there are increasing concerns about the accuracy of ad effectiveness reporting from providers like Meta, and large scientific studies that have called into question the incrementality of display and video advertising, this tends to fly in the face of reality.

In fact, our own work in this area points to the fact that **80% of the marketing data generated by cookie-based solutions is incorrect**. This is due to the poor job that cookies do of tracking multi-device, multi-session user journeys.

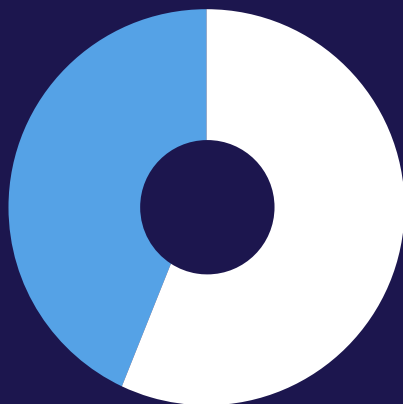


85% Believe there are sufficient replacement solutions available.



38% 

Are placing their bets on Unified Attribution platforms but appear unaware of the GDPR related issues associated with them.



82%

Believe that cookieless tracking is achievable, however 42% responded with a 'possibly' caveat.



90%

Are confident that their partner will provide a solution for the cookieless future.





61% of retail marketers intend to implement a solution in the next 12 months

It is worth noting up front here that **51% of retail marketers have this sitting in the medium priority category**. Which seems a little counter-intuitive given that the clock is ticking in the background.

However, this may well reflect the fact that marketers are struggling with other priorities too including:

- Recession (or stagflation)
- Reduction in media spend budgets
- Rising staff costs due to inflationary pressure

And the fact that **61% of respondents intend to implement a solution in the next 12 months** - and **98% within the next 2 years**, shows that the need for urgency is well understood.

Given the timelines, it is slightly concerning that – whilst confidence regarding getting buy-in for this type of solution is high (80% are confident they can get it) – **78% are likely to look to build their own solution**.

The biggest challenge here is the poor quality of existing data inputs from cookie-based systems.

And it is also clear that **89% of respondents are betting on Unified ID 2.0 solutions** being compliant despite GDPR rulings to the contrary. And the fact that they still rely on cookies for attribution.

How marketers are preparing for the end of cookies

67% of marketers are looking at their options and running marketing activity with browsers other than Chrome. This figure jumps up to 81% amongst eCommerce Directors, which might reflect their proximity to the commercial revenue realities of the change.

At the same time, **84% of respondents are indicating that they are looking to move spend away from search and social.**

So, where is this spend being placed?

More than half of this is being spent outside of YouTube (36%), principally on Direct TV/OTT (51%). A huge signal that it is finally time for Digital TV to begin overtaking Linear TV as the main medium for reach for traditional marketers.

The other standout is the continued growth of Retail Media Networks (RMNs) – with 31% of respondents identifying this as an area for growth.

Amazon is the most prominent player in this market, but Walmart also made \$2.7bn selling ads last year. And, not only are there others like Target doing similar, Uber expects to make \$1bn as an ad platform next year.



It is slightly disappointing to see that only 64% of retail marketers use more sophisticated attribution models. Even though those models have been available for over a decade.

Finally, and to close our summary, indications are that **84% of retail marketers are planning to make the move to GA4.**

For us, this is a damning statistic on the state of web analytics in general.

Despite issues around the illegality of GA in the EU, issues of data quality from this type of cookie-based solution and a complete lack of data portability between GA and GA4, it seems marketers are not heeding the warnings here.

We hope you find these, and the rest of the survey results, useful.

Chris Liversidge
CEO & Founder, Corvidae



“2023/24 are likely to be watershed years for marketers. Those who come equipped to deal with the cookieless world will thrive; those who are not ready will struggle.”

- Chris Liversidge, CEO & Founder

The Survey

Respondent employers/organisations

Respondents were digital marketers in online retailers. All had a minimum spend of £500,000 per annum on digital marketing.

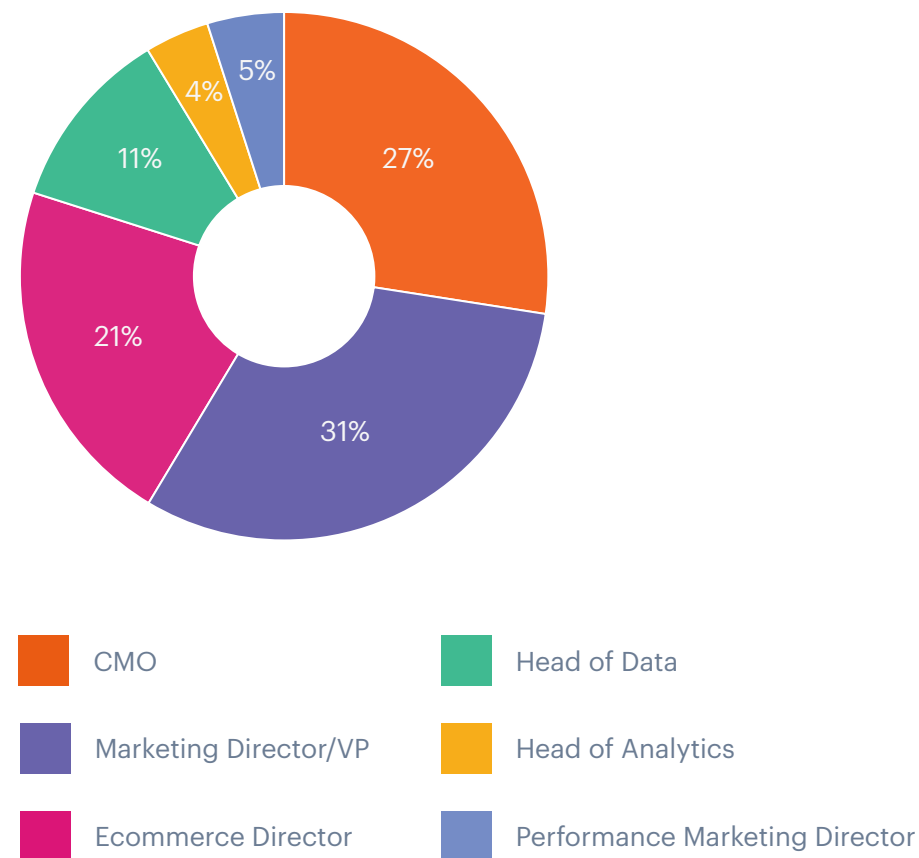
Respondents

Our 150 respondents were CMOs, Marketing Directors/VPs, Ecommerce Directors/VPs, Head of Data, or Performance Marketing Directors.

These job functions were selected to ensure that responses came from experienced people who are involved in the decision-making process when it comes to digital marketing investments.

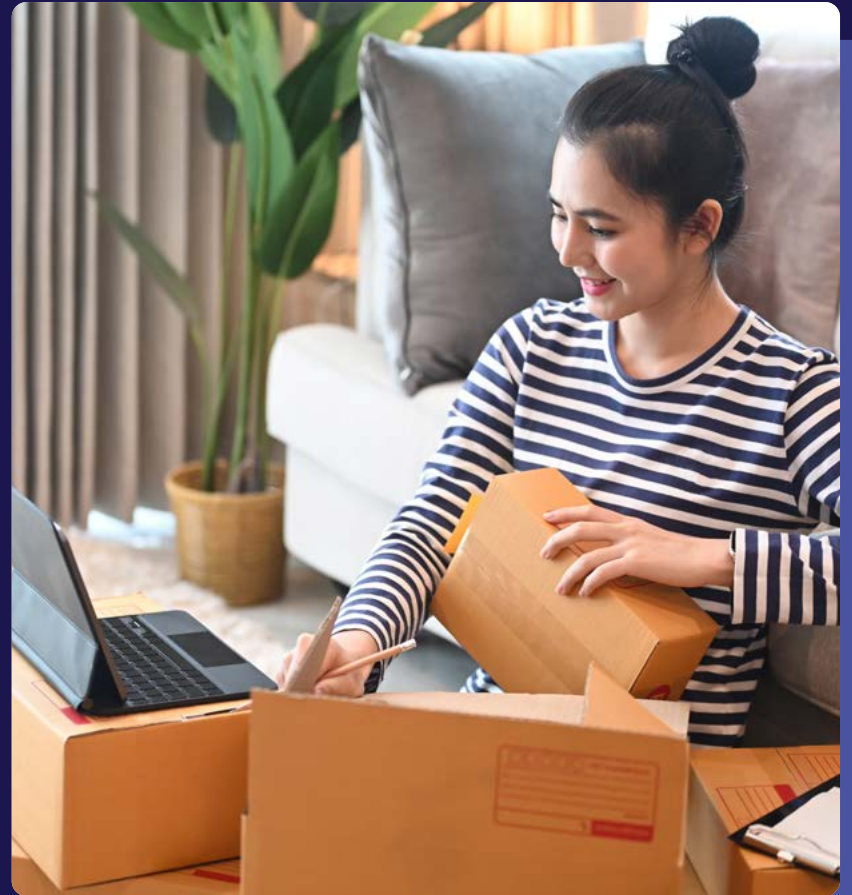
Methodology

The survey was carried out on behalf of Corvidae by independent survey consultants, Censuswide, in April 2023. Respondents were sourced by Censuswide according to the parameters shown above, with responses collected online.



Part 1: Knowledge and preparation for the change.

In this first part of the survey, we wanted to get a feel for the current level of understanding of the looming impact of the removal of cookies within retail marketing, how the change is being viewed and current levels of preparation.



#1 We asked...

What, if anything, is your biggest concern surrounding the removal of cookies?

A resounding **97% of respondents** are concerned about the loss of cookies having a material impact on their ability to either understand which marketing activities are effective or even serve ads effectively.

And that chimes with [similar research](#) conducted by GetApp and HubSpot.

Given we are already underway with Google's removal of third-party cookies from +60% of the browser market - in a rollout that will conclude in Q3 2024 - this is a damning insight into the over-reliance on cookies in the digital marketing ecosystem.

Cookies were first used for web analytics in 1994. Our reliance on them as part of a modern marketing stack is now outdated. And, also, devastating to any attempt to efficiently grow and acquire new customers online effectively.

That 73% of all respondents are specifically concerned with measurement tells us that - while finding a replacement for activating ad targeting (the purpose of Google's proposed cookie replacement technologies, [Topics](#) and Protected Audience API) - is surely important, the problem faced by marketers is more foundational. Namely that they have no home truth, and no baseline against which to measure performance.

Without measurement, marketing is just a shot in the dark followed by hopes and dreams.





2023/24 will be watershed years

2023/24 will be a watershed period for marketers. Those who come equipped to deal with a cookieless world will thrive, and those who are not ready will struggle.

As marketers, we are more aware of alternative technologies today. Thanks to the recent boom in interest in generative AI – like ChatGPT, Bard, DALL·E 2 etc.

AI is also a replacement for the use of cookies and is being used to stitch together the complex journeys our customers make online. With **Corvidae**, we have pioneered the use of AI to accurately build and optimise customer conversion paths – and to more effectively reach and serve ads in a cookieless world.

“2023 and 2024 will be watershed years.

Those who come equipped to deal with a cookie-free world will thrive, and those who are not ready will fade away.”

#2 We asked...

How reliant, if at all, are your current marketing efforts on the use of third-party cookies?

Our data shows that just under **83% of respondents are reliant on cookies in some way to support effective marketing.**

And, intuitively, that is what you might have expected to see given that cookies have been the rails that a significant percentage of digital marketing campaigns have run on for some time now.

However, what is also clear is that businesses are still somewhat siloed in their understanding of the cookie's role in measurement. As such, **50% of Heads of Analytics indicate that they are not reliant on them.**

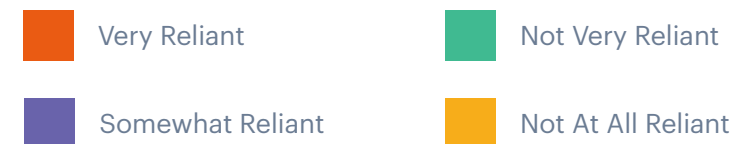
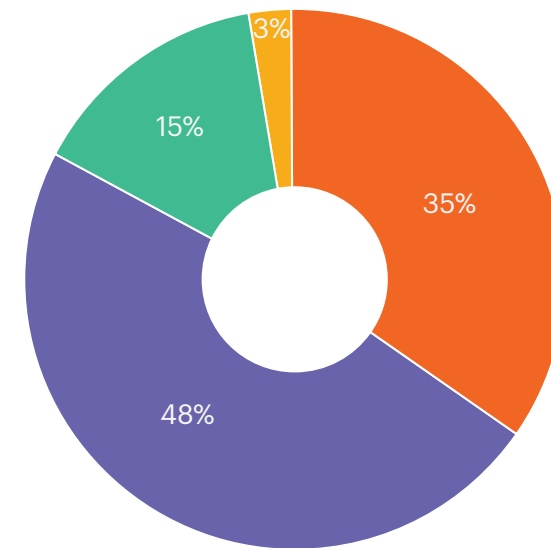
Perhaps this is not such a surprising result given that, for many businesses, the analytics function is more heavily skewed to either business performance reporting – and simply accepting numbers provided for their models by analytics systems and marketing teams, Or more traditional econometrics approaches - which sacrifice actionability for a more statistical trend insight.

The reality is that the pandemic brought more scrutiny to online performance data, as online created larger volumes of revenue for bricks and mortar businesses - which has certainly driven this number up from years gone by.

However, the level of uncertainty in marketing numbers used for business performance reporting becomes abundantly clear when we look at those who are closer to the action and actual reality of trying to optimise and report accurately on marketing activity.

CMOs (88%), Marketing Director/VPs (75%), eCommerce Directors (84%) and Heads of Data (94%) all more clearly recognise the gap between reality and the data being presented to them by their existing analytics platforms and AdTech.

All of which are reliant on cookies.



#3 We asked...

How accurate, if at all, do you think cookie-based tracking is?

Part of the concern for the removal of third-party cookies that is underway, is a persistent belief that cookies provide some level of accuracy.

79% of respondents believe cookies are a technology that provides accurate data - hence the concern about their loss.

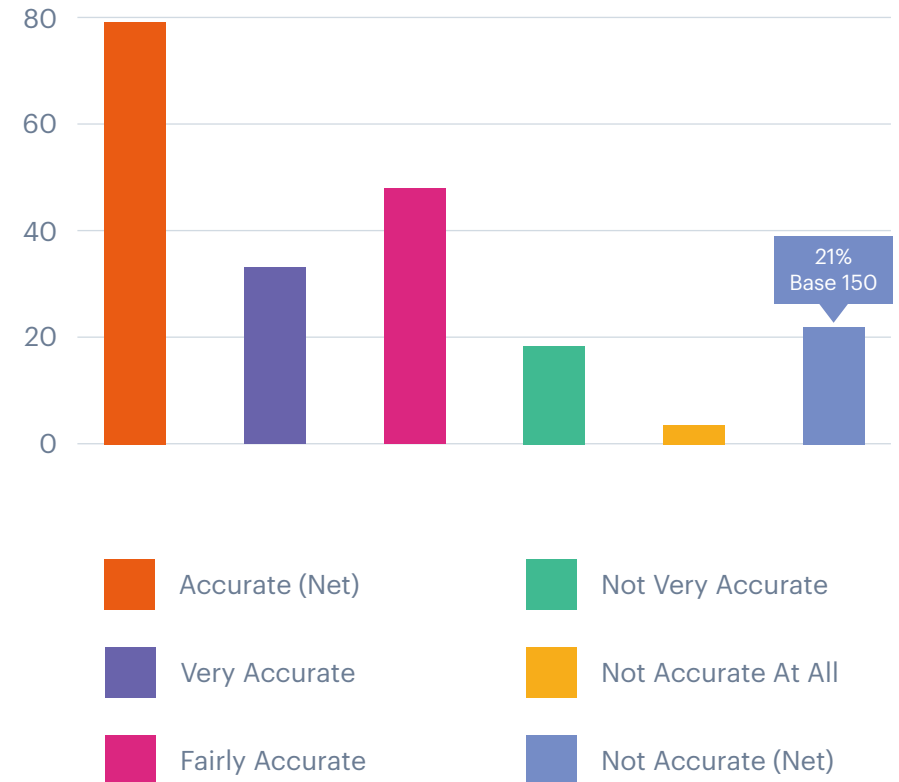
Historically, this is a belief that has stood up to light levels of scrutiny. When there was a less fragmented online advertising world, marketers mainly had only two sources of truth for their digital marketing activity:

- Their own analytics platforms
- Their Search Advertising spend

Spend which was completely dominated by Google Ads and Google Analytics in most markets.

And Google made sure that there was no discrepancy between the reporting offered by its ad platform and its analytics platform.

Today, we live in a multi-siloed world with spend fragmented across a myriad of self-reporting platforms, and failure of attribution is a sign that cookies underpinning those platforms are not fit for purpose.



The Rise of Facebook

With the rise of Facebook (now Meta) over the last decade, we have slowly seen a second silo for our marketing spend emerge. Which has caused question marks about the accuracy of Meta's reporting - as increasingly the self-reported data from Google and Meta has failed to match up with cash in bank.

We now operate in a multi-siloed world with:

- The recent explosive growth of Amazon as a key third channel for brands
- Apple and Android for mobile app advertising and tracking
- And the current rise of TikTok as a meaningful alternative to Meta

The blame for that discrepancy between self-reporting and cash in bank has been laid at the door of lookback windows.

And, also, a generous self-interest by the big platforms in claiming credit for sales where no click has directly occurred by Social, Mobile and Display Ad platforms.

This is simply the age-old problem of an ad impression being given credit for a sale even though the ad was seen after the conversion occurred.



Cookies actually do a pretty poor job of targeting and tracking

However, the real cause is more pernicious than lookback windows and generous self-reporting.

The evidence lies partly in the failure to launch Programmatic advertising as a meaningful part of marketer's ad spend.

For example, if third-party cookies are so accurate then why, after a decade, is Programmatic Display spend not a more meaningful part of our marketing budgets alongside Search and Social?

For most businesses, Display is a single digit percentage of budget.

And those budgets are dominated by retargeting, and trying to capture customers who didn't convert first time round - not new customer acquisition.

There are large scientifically robust studies that show cookies do not do a good job in providing data for targeting ads.

For example, in 2019 (a much less fragmented online world than we have now):

This study shows that **to get any incrementality at all in cookie-based ad placement**, advertisers must spend:

→ **2.5x the cost of the ad for a normal display ad**

→ **1.5x the cost for video**

In short, this study is telling us that cookies do not work as advertised – it is only premium inventory online that actually adds value for ads.

This means that the contextual targeting data intended to be provided by cookies is ineffective. Despite that same data being very effective when it was available on social platforms, like Facebook.

Cost Data for Digital Audience Solutions				
	Display Ad Costs		Video Ad Costs	
	Targeting	No Targeting	Targeting	No Targeting
Publisher	1.36	1.36	11	11
SSP Exchange*	0.13		1.09	
3rd Party Data Costs	1.33		1.33	
Ad Serving & Verification	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
SUM Sell Side Costs	3.02	1.56	13.62	11.2
DSP*	0.44		2	
Trading Desk / Execution*	0.45		2.04	
SUM Digital Ads Costs	3.92	1.56	17.67	11.2
Agency of Record*	0.27	0.11	1.24	0.78
Final Costs Advertiser	4.2	1.67	18.9	11.98
Final Ratio to No Targeting	2.51		1.58	

*Refers to variable costs. Sources Slius (2018); Gertz (2018)

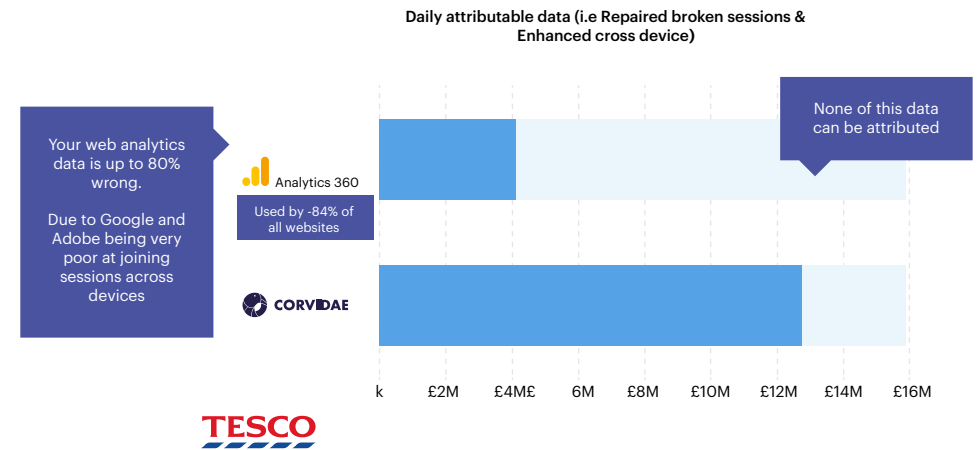
Source: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3203131

80% of your marketing data from cookies is incorrect

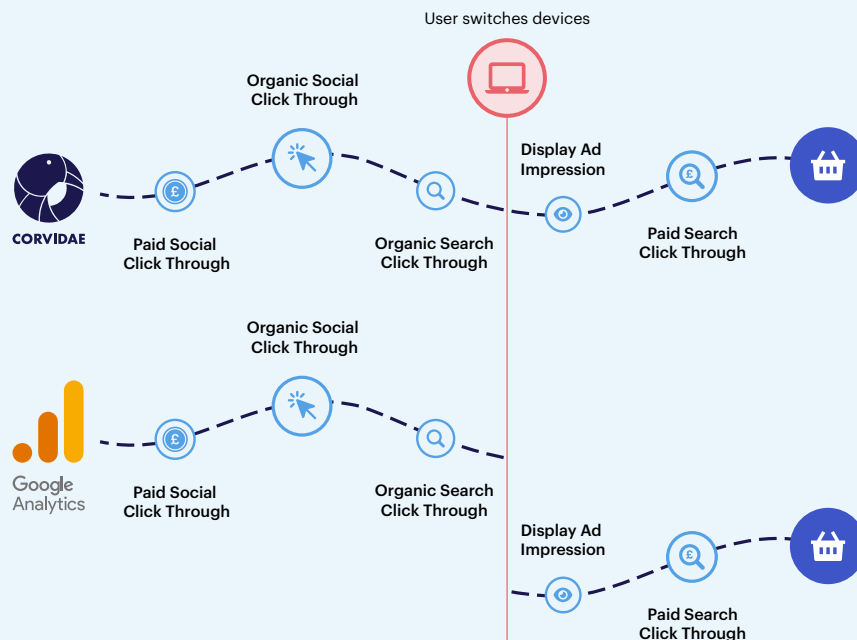
Cookie-based targeting data is – and always has been - broken.

When looking at client analytics data eight years ago, we found that the same failure of the cookie to do its job was present in first-party cookies (those cookies used by your web analytics platform like GA and Adobe).

Back then we were able to show that first-party cookies are only 20% accurate when compared to true customer conversion paths stitched together using AI and Machine Learning techniques instead of cookies.



Source: [Corvidae attribution platform](#)



The cause of that inaccuracy is simple (as shown in our diagram on the left): cookies do not stitch the vast majority of journeys together.

Instead, they provide only fragments of journeys.

Today's online journeys are fragmented across multiple devices, apps, browsers and media types. The cookie is expected to persistently join all those interactions together, when it has no technical means to do so.

What was useful in 1996 is not fit for purpose in 2023.



“The modern customer journey is too nuanced for cookie-based tracking. Marketers need to switch to a solution that can keep up with their users – and their business.”

- Simon Tapson, Head of Product

#4 We asked...

What, if anything, is your main priority when preparing for the cookieless future?

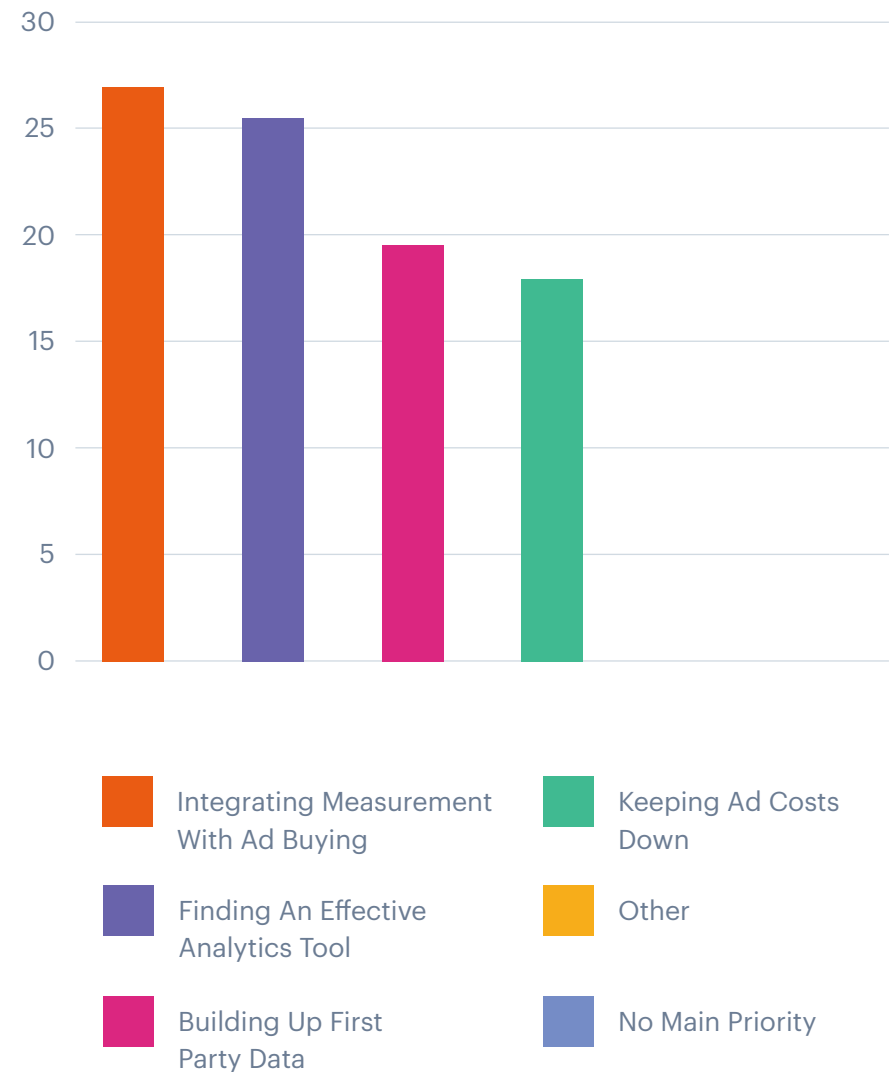
75% of marketers in our survey have identified the need to integrate analytics with ad buying and keep new customer acquisition costs down.

There have been attempts to replicate a cookie approach in other ways, for example, the IAB Tech Lab's Project REARC and associated media identifier frameworks. However, there were significant legal issues with such an approach that ultimately snowballed into a finding **that rules the IAB to be in breach of GDPR.**

Given that businesses will be reluctant to incur significant fines by using direct cookie replacements, embracing an approach that does not have any personally identifiable information (PII) in its operation is essential.

Probabilistically generating conversion paths using AI is the only solution that currently offers any ability to measure and optimise media spend. And report back on marketing performance with any degree of accuracy today.

Corvidae is the first such platform and holds patent on the use of AI for this purpose.



#5 We asked...

What solution(s), if any, do you have in place for the removal of cookies?

It is clear that a wide variety of approaches are being investigated by businesses - as you might expect, given the circumstances and uncertainty in the marketplace.

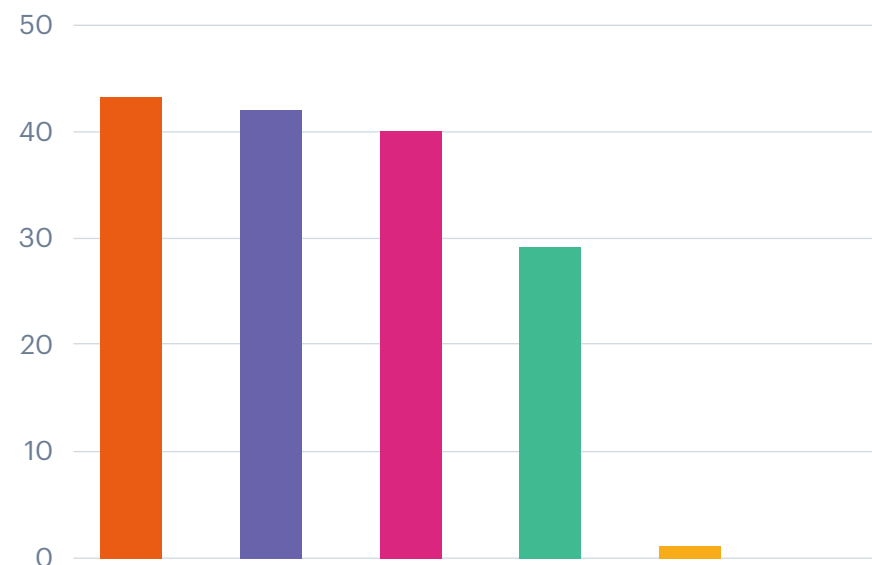
Removing third-party data altogether

Just short of 43% indicate they will remove third-party data altogether from their mix. Given the lack of incrementality discussed earlier, this is an excellent trend to see emerging.

This will hopefully encourage greatly simplified tech stacks. As around 50% of the cost of placing an ad is lost in the gap between the advertiser and the publisher serving the ad. A huge gap that has driven a surge in poor quality inventory over recent years.



43% of respondents have indicated they will use Google's Chrome based solutions despite privacy concerns.



Google's Chrome-based options

They are a sizeable part of the picture (43%) which is logical as they will be the only way to serve targeted display ads to 60% of online browsers.

However, both Topics and Protected Audience API (which was recently renamed as the 'Protected Audience' API) have been dogged by privacy concerns over the years and, as things stand, they both require opt-in by the user. Which means they are likely to suffer from the type of poor opt in rates from iOS users who were asked if they wanted to share their details with advertising platforms after the 14.5 update (in Apple's own push for privacy controls).

The result for Apple? A paltry 2% opt-in!

Contextual advertising

Placing ads where you think your important customers will be, based on the content around the ad is a robust and simple approach that is being embraced by 40% of respondents.

However, it is important to remember it also brings a lack of optimisation control. And finding favourable deals on high quality inventory is dependent on your ability to leverage good ad pricing either directly or with your media agency.

Unified attribution platforms

Measuring the performance of all of this activity **will be key to success in a cookie-free world**. Which explains the marked interest in Unified Attribution platforms (38%). And should those systems also be free of first-party cookies, they can offer extremely valuable optimisation control - and cheaper new customer acquisition in the modern marketing landscape.



#6 We asked...

Do you believe there are sufficient solutions available for the removal of cookies?

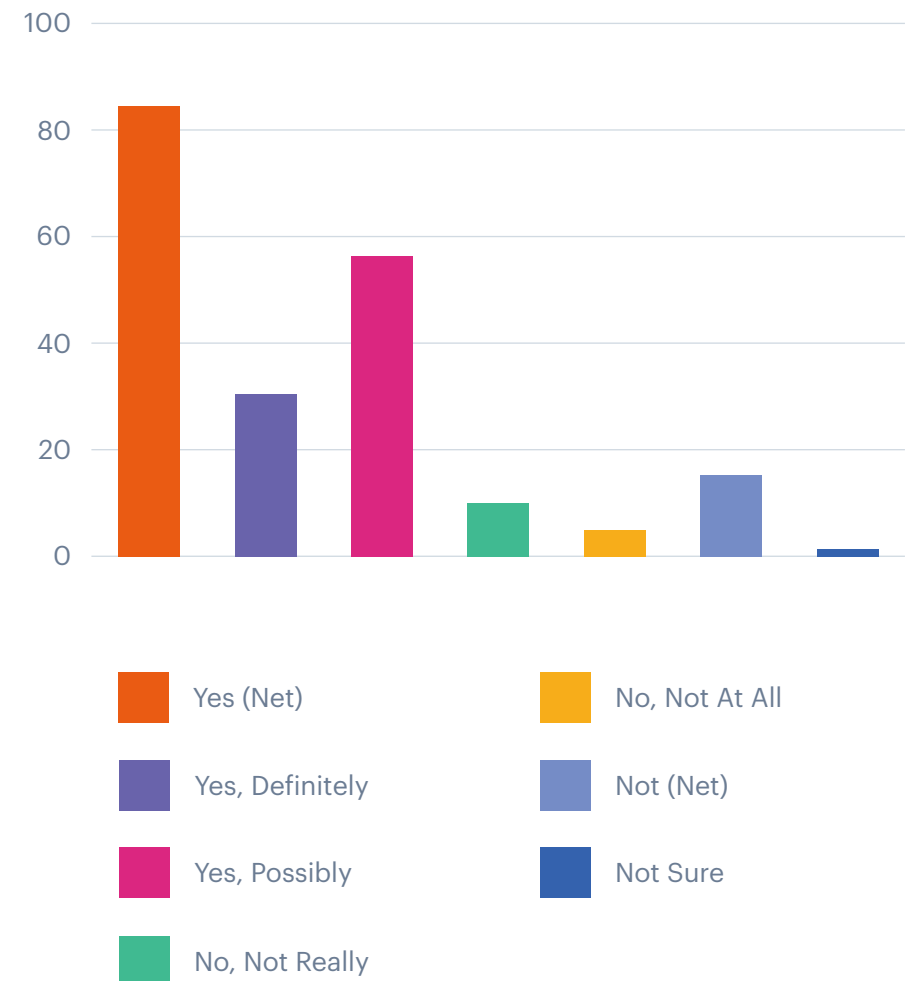
It is clear here that many marketers (85%) will be sleepwalking into the opt-in problem presented by Google's Topics and Protected Audience API.

Touted for the last few years as a direct replacement for third-party cookies, changes in scope and specification have resulted in today's watered-down variants. Variants that are still receiving challenges over their actual privacy credentials from the [W3C's Technical Advisory Group \(TAG\)](#).

The reality is that **Chrome will not offer a meaningful solution for targeting the bulk of Chrome users**. Opt-in rates will be predictably low, and fundamentally, the effectiveness of third-party data being offered in this way is low also.

In fact, Chrome will see further performance declines for ads served by these new technologies as there is no viewability control offered and no reporting alternatives other than last-touch attribution.

This means that ads can be served underneath other ads – or even off page – and be tracked as a successful impression. Whilst ads which actually do influence a sale will be hidden behind yet another siloed, last touch self-reporting mechanism from Google, who have now also removed Last Touch alternative attribution models within GA4. A move that cannot be dressed up as anything other than self-serving for their dominant search advertising revenues.



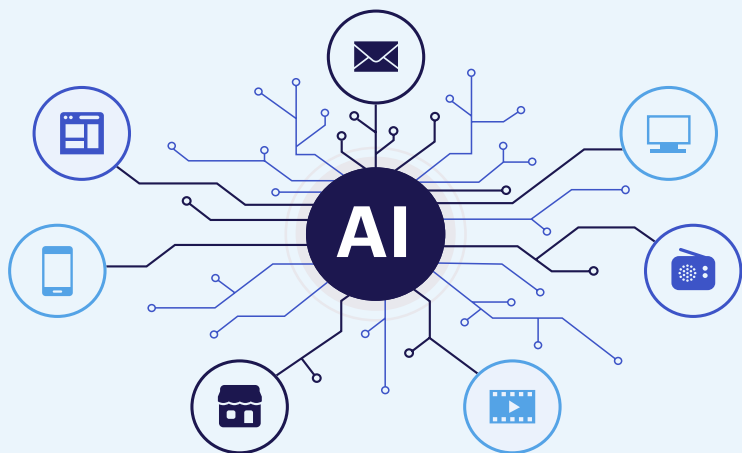
#7 We asked...

Do you believe it is possible to achieve fully cookieless tracking?

On the face of it, the headline stat is a positive one here with **82% of respondents indicating a positive answer**.

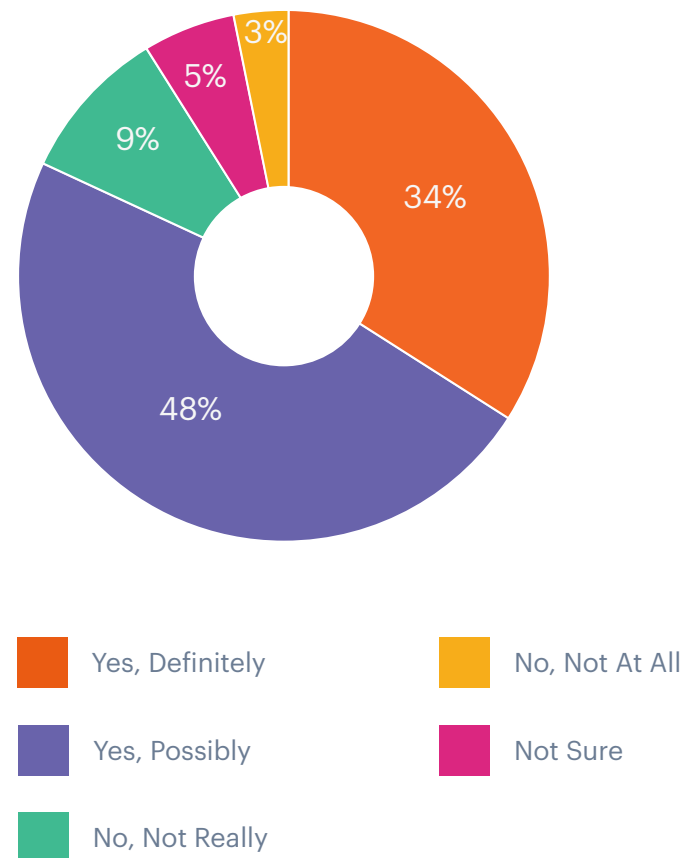
Although, the fact that a majority (**48%**) responded 'yes possibly' could point to lingering uncertainty here.

However, the key underlying issue for marketers and brands is going to be the efficacy of the solutions that they are putting in place in terms of targeting effectiveness and compliance as cookies go away.



And the reality is that **cookieless tracking** exists today - and it is something that we have been working on for some time now.

Leveraging the powerful capabilities in AI and Machine Learning, we can deliver high quality attribution that completely outstrips the jobs done by cookie-based solutions.



#8 We asked...

How confident, if at all, are you that your partners will provide a solution for the cookieless future?

It feels that, with the exception of a relatively small percentage who are not confident (10%), there is an equal split between **those who have strong confidence (45%)** in their partners and **another 45% who are confident**. But with some reservations.

The danger here, as we pointed out above, is that those in the 'very confident' camp are perhaps not digging into the potential issues with the type of solutions that partners are putting in front of them.

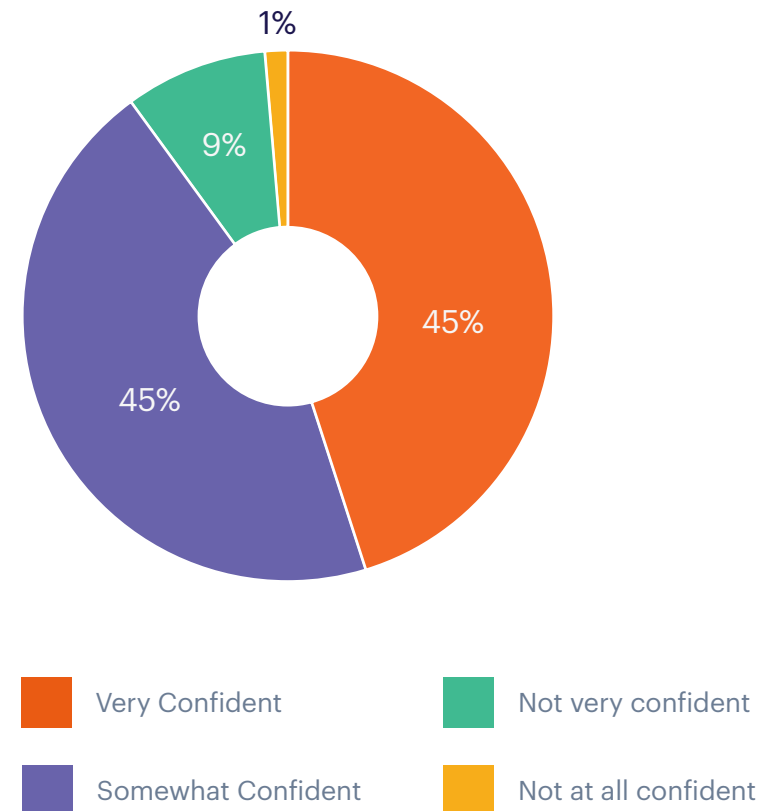
And not asking the difficult questions around Chrome-enabled advertising in Google's new proposed solutions like:

- What percentage of the actual full Chrome audience are we really able to reach?
- What stage are these solutions really at as regards privacy compliance?

This is of high importance given concerns raised by the W3C's Technical Advisory Group (amongst others).

And how many brands are blissfully unaware of the GDPR problem that exists **with ID based solutions that are being offered?**

It is entirely possible that those in the 'somewhat confident' camp are uncovering and wrestling with some of these issues with their chosen partners right now. And that is reflected in their answer above.





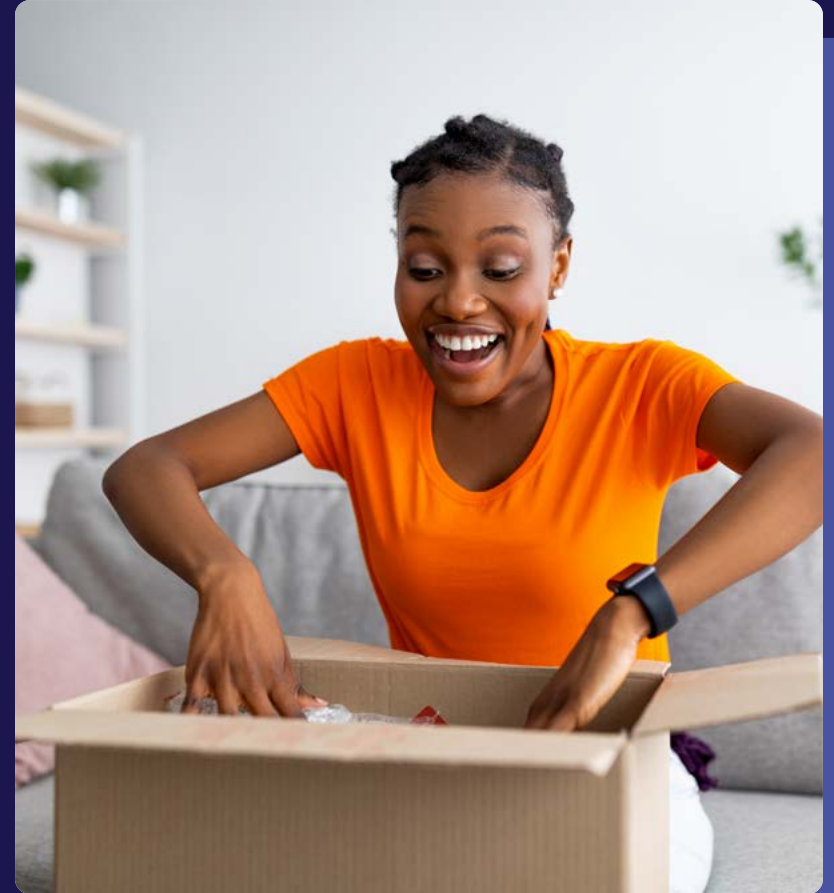
“Marketing agencies and partners have a big role to play in helping businesses get ready for the cookieless future. But most are still marking their own homework.”

- Claud Monro, Client Success Director

Part 2: A review of existing solutions

In part 2 of our survey, we set out to understand:

- How existing solutions are viewed by retail marketers
- And if they are making any changes to their existing MarTech stack or looking for new solutions



#9 We asked...

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I can easily obtain buy in for moving to a new analytic solution?

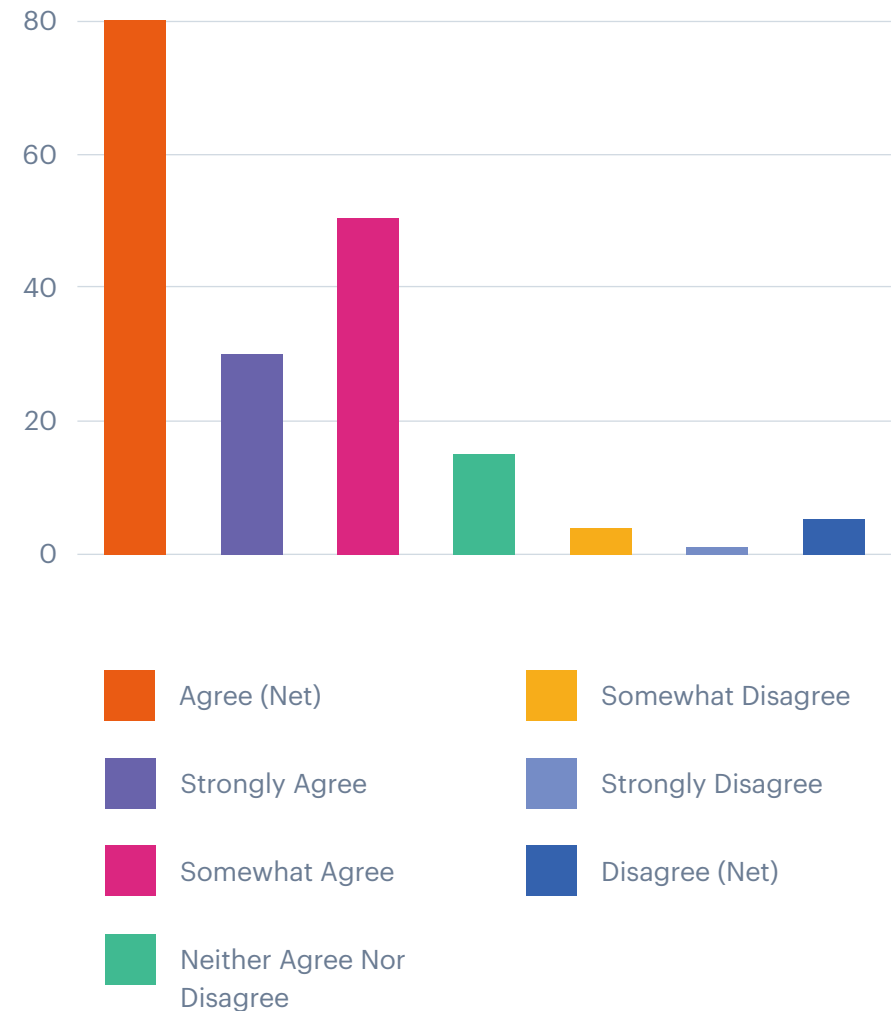
The fact that **80% are confident that they can get the buy-in for a new analytics solution** points to the fact that businesses are aware of the need for change – and that revisiting their tech stack is going to be part of that process.

Clearly, as part of that process, marketers are going to look to futureproof any new analytics solution they put in place.

And that includes, not only finding a solution that sets them successfully navigate the death of third-party cookies, but also helps them to overcome some of their concerns around bias in reporting from some of the big platform players like Facebook.



80% of marketers are confident they can get the buy-in they need for new analytic solutions.

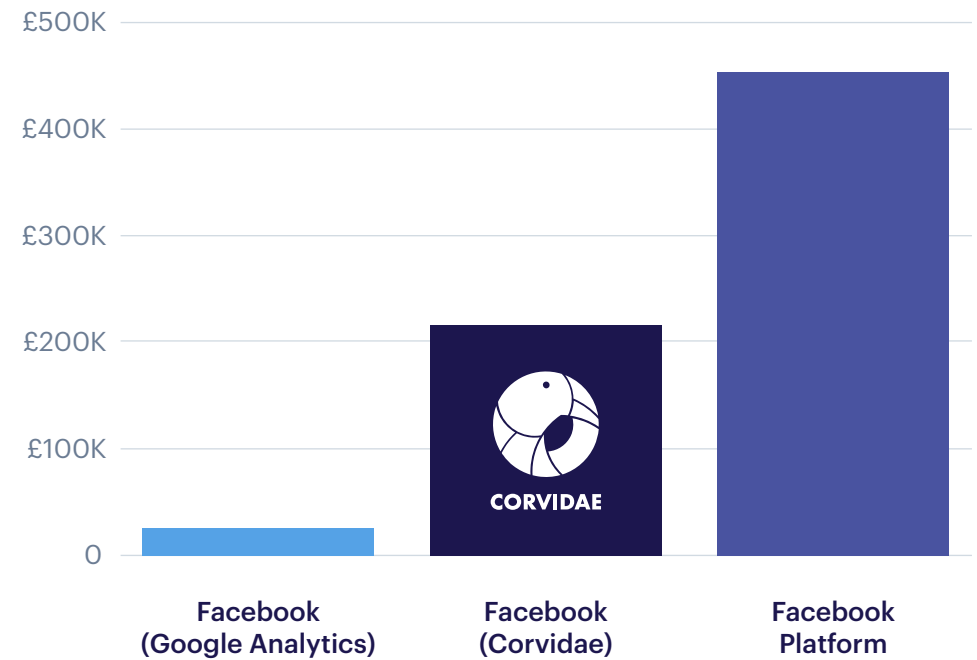




Take this example from our online clothing retailer, where the revenue being reported for a specific campaign by Facebook was just under £450k. Whilst Google Analytics was reporting only £20,000 for the same campaign (that is a factor of over x20).

The true figure? By using our own attribution platform we were able to unbundle the underlying data and identify true revenue generated of just under £250,000.

Facebook Revenue Reporting Comparison



#10 We asked...

How likely or unlikely are you to attempt to build your own attribution solution for the removal of cookies?

A total of **78%** of respondents have indicated that they are likely to attempt to build their own solution.

This is something we know quite a bit about, having set out on our journey to find a better attribution solution than cookie-based approaches around a decade ago.

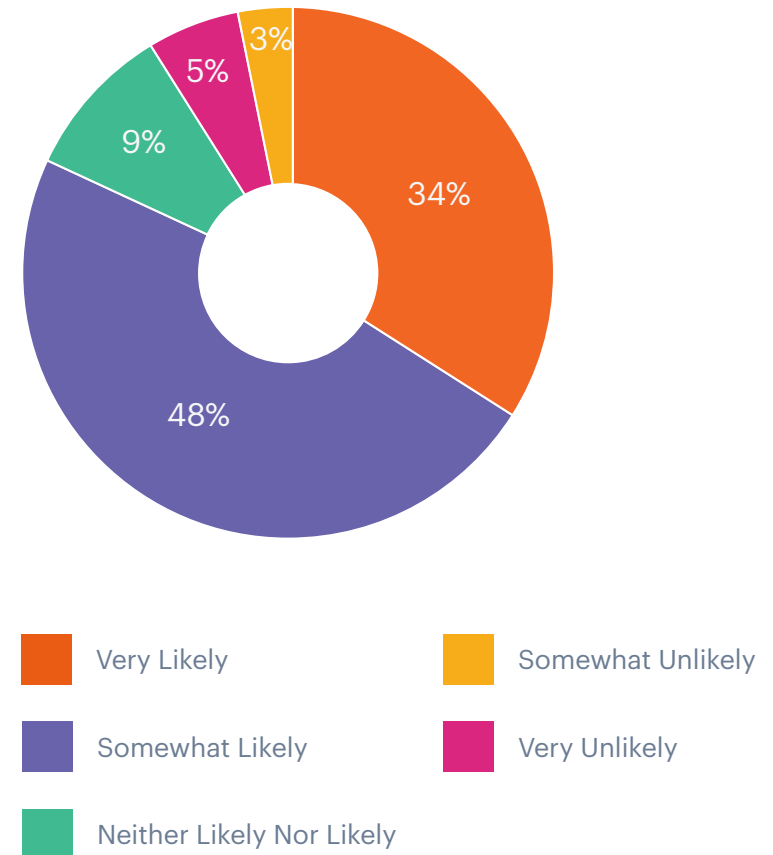
And alarm bells were ringing out for us on reading this stat in particular.

One of the key challenges here is that **effective attribution requires highly accurate data**. And, historically, that is the reason we first began looking at alternatives to cookies for attribution purposes.

Put quite simply, cookies do a particularly poor job of tracking complex, multi-device journeys – with **80% of data being incorrectly attributed in this way.**

What is needed here is a way to effectively rebuild your analytics data from the ground up. So, you can accurately identify customer journeys and the marketing activity that is really influencing them. This is the approach that **Corvidae** takes by effectively employing AI and Machine Learning techniques to replace cookies.

The major concern here is that ID-based approaches will be non-compliant - and still rely on cookies for attribution.



#11 We asked...

Where does finding a solution for removal of cookies sit on your priority list?

The headline stats make interesting reading on this one.

Leaving aside the fact that **a quarter of those don't see it as a priority** (or the 5% that don't have it on their list at all), it is interesting that as high as **51% have it sitting in the 'medium' category**.

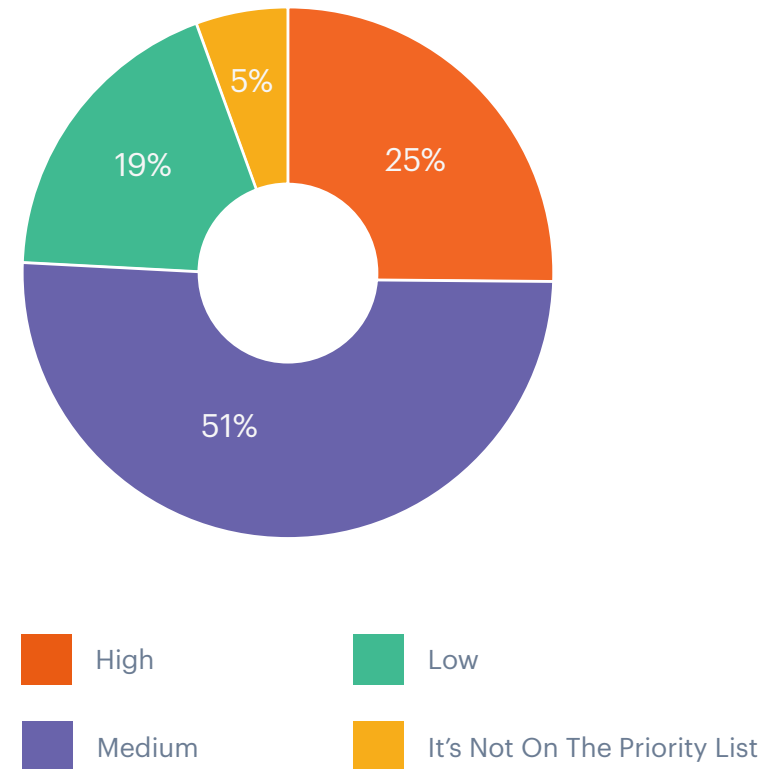
This matters, not least because the clock is ticking, and we are heading inexorably to Google's latest date of Q3 2024. But also because of the sheer volume of advertising spend that relies on cookie-based tracking (regardless of how poor that tracking is) that simply won't be available once they are switched off in Chrome.

A further breakdown in the data points to the fact that **eCommerce Directors (38%)** and **Performance Marketing Directors (43%)** have it on the high priority list which is well above the level of survey respondents as a whole.

And is perhaps reflective of how close they are sitting to the 'fire' on this one.

It is also worth noting for context that retail marketers are struggling with a range of other major priorities that includes **recession (or stagflation), a reduction in media spend budgets, rising staff costs due to inflationary pressure** – and the list goes on.

However, the message that marketers need to get across internally is that: **accuracy = efficiency and profit growth**.





“With marketing budgets being cut, it’s vital to know how every marketing dollar is impacting the bottom line. This isn’t possible without a cookieless solution in place.”

- Julie Molloy, Head of Marketing

#12 We asked...

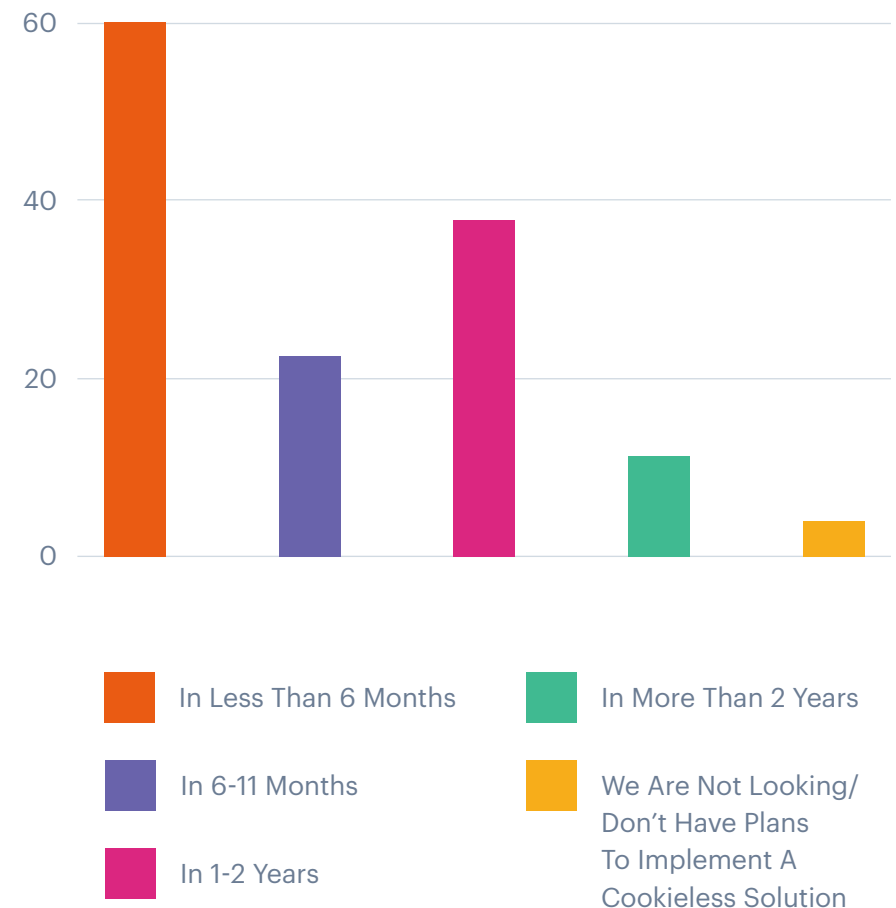
When, if ever, are you looking to implement a cookieless solution?

Stats indicating that **61% of respondents intend to implement a solution in the next 12 months** - and 98% within the next 2 years - would tend to indicate that there is good awareness that things need to change. And fast.

It is also entirely possible that previous delays from Google – they have put the deadline back for cookie removal twice already – may have created some complacency and a false sense of security that third-party cookies might not go away after all.

In fact, in a recent webinar that we ran **75% of attendees said they didn't believe that Google would really ditch the cookie!**.

However, data privacy is more important than ever and there is momentum around this from Google. Who are even, strangely, releasing case studies that don't read particularly well in performance terms as part of this process.



#13 We asked...

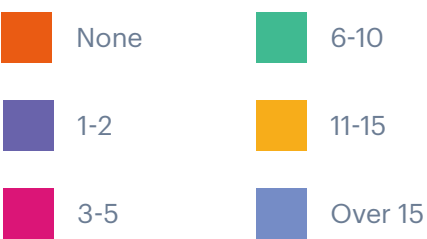
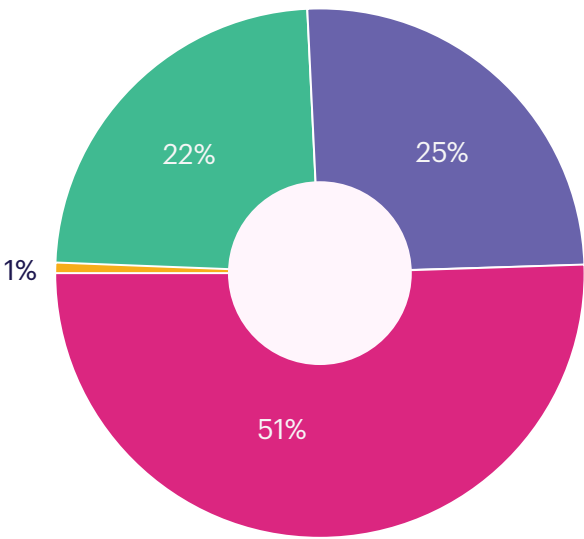
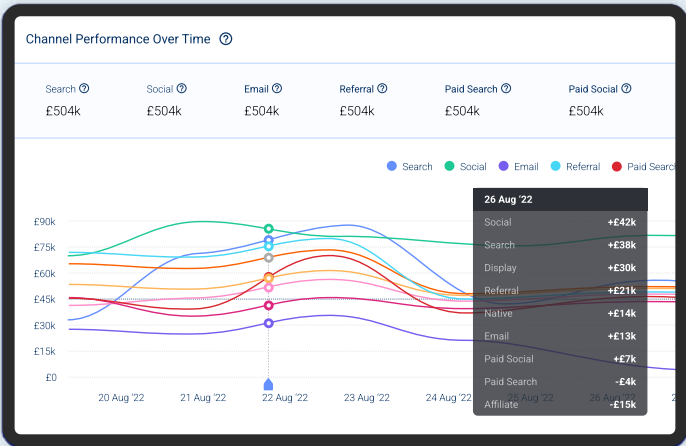
How many tools are currently in your MarTech stack?

The figure that really jumped out at us here is that **73% of the market has between 3 and 10 tools in their MarTech stack!**

Unfortunately, we live in a siloed and complex world, where marketers are juggling data from a plethora of tools. And self-reporting from AdTech and MarTech providers is endemic - leaving marketers with very real concerns around bias in that reporting.

The end result is a collection of channels effectively ‘marking their own homework’ which feeds into a lack of accuracy in marketing performance analysis.

What is needed is a single, unified view that removes this bias and can deliver highly accurate reporting across channel, campaign and individual creative levels.



#14 We asked...

How confident or unconfident are you that identity graph data or tools (e.g. Unified ID 2.0 or CDPs) can be a practical and compliant solution for the removal of cookies?

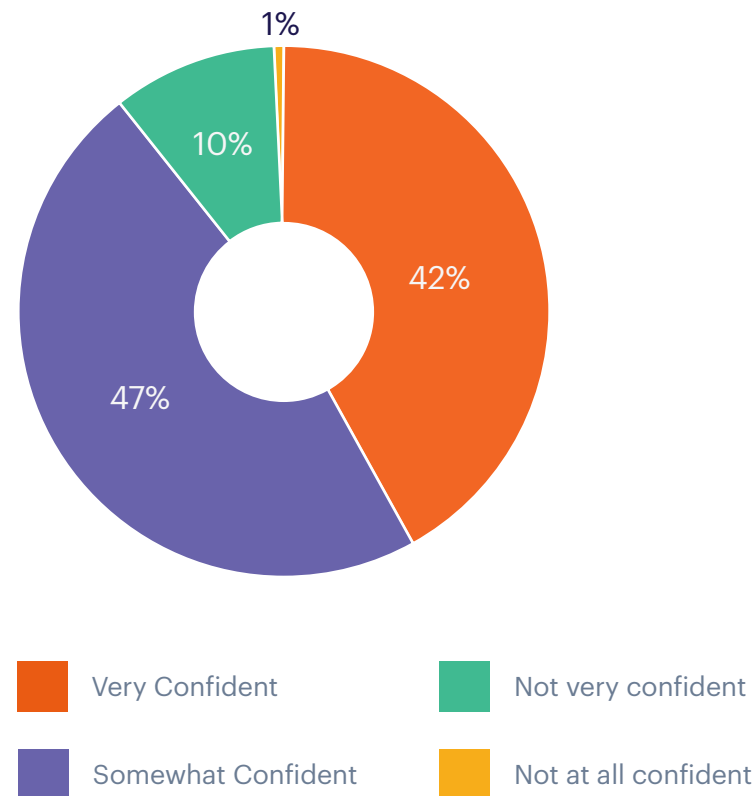
So, this one really stuck out for us and is concerning. And again, the headline stats make interesting reading.

89% of respondents are confident that these types of tools will meet theirs – and the regulators – needs. With 42% of those 'very' confident in this respect.

It is clear, based on the data, that marketers are betting heavily on IAB or big initiatives like Unified ID 2.0 being compliant solutions for them.

When, in reality, they have **already been ruled as non-compliant for GDPR.**

It will likely be only a matter of time before the MarTech platform projects currently underway have to be ripped up and revisited, given the use of non-compliant identifiers in ID and cookie-based solutions.

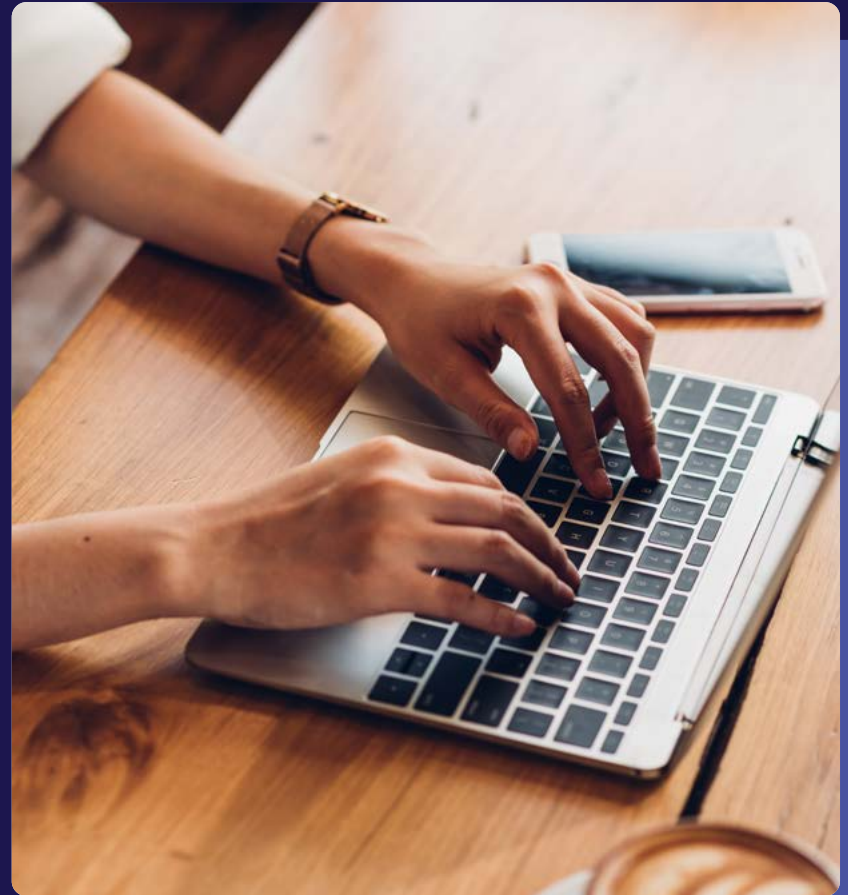


89% of marketers believe that identity graph data or tools will meet their needs despite rulings of non-compliance with GDPR.

Part 3: Life after cookies

In this final part of the survey we wanted to:

- Understand how retail marketers find optimising their current marketing activity outside of Google (as other browsers have already removed third-party cookies)
- How they plan to optimise activity following the removal of cookies



#15 We asked...

Do you currently run marketing activity within browsers other than Google Chrome?

Marketers know they need to remove reliance on Google, despite its dominance.

There is a **fairly high percentage of marketers (67%) that are clearly exploring their options outside of Chrome-based ad solutions.**

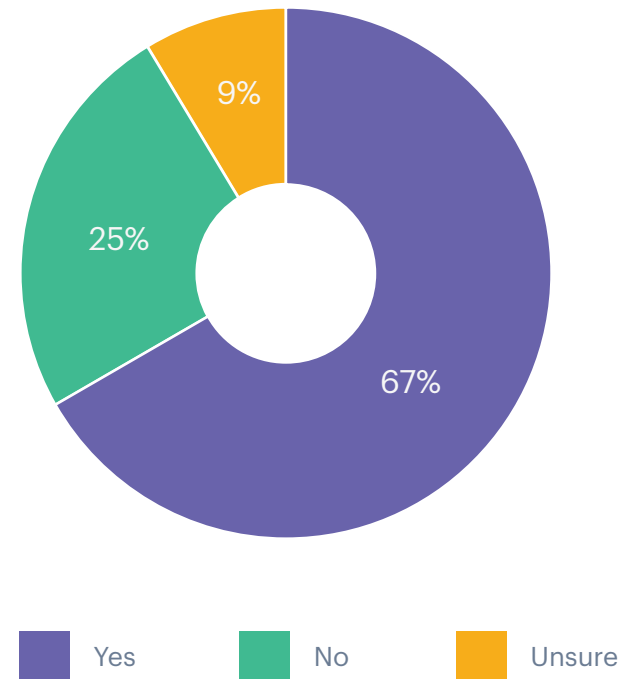
In fact, that figure jumps up to 81% when we look at eCommerce Directors alone. Which might reflect their proximity to the commercial realities within their businesses and the need to find alternative solutions quickly to protect sales and revenue.

It would have been interesting to see the stats on this question 2 years ago for comparison. As the likelihood is that the 'yes' response may well have been lower.

Interestingly, leaving aside the prevalence of Google, there has been a **slight increase in market share for Bing according to Statista.**

Coincidence or the beginning of a knock-on effect from Google's decision on cookie deprecation and lack of viable solutions?

Only time will tell. But with Bing ads offering a CPC that is 70% lower than Google, it might be something that retail marketers want to explore as a result of the changes.



#16 We asked...

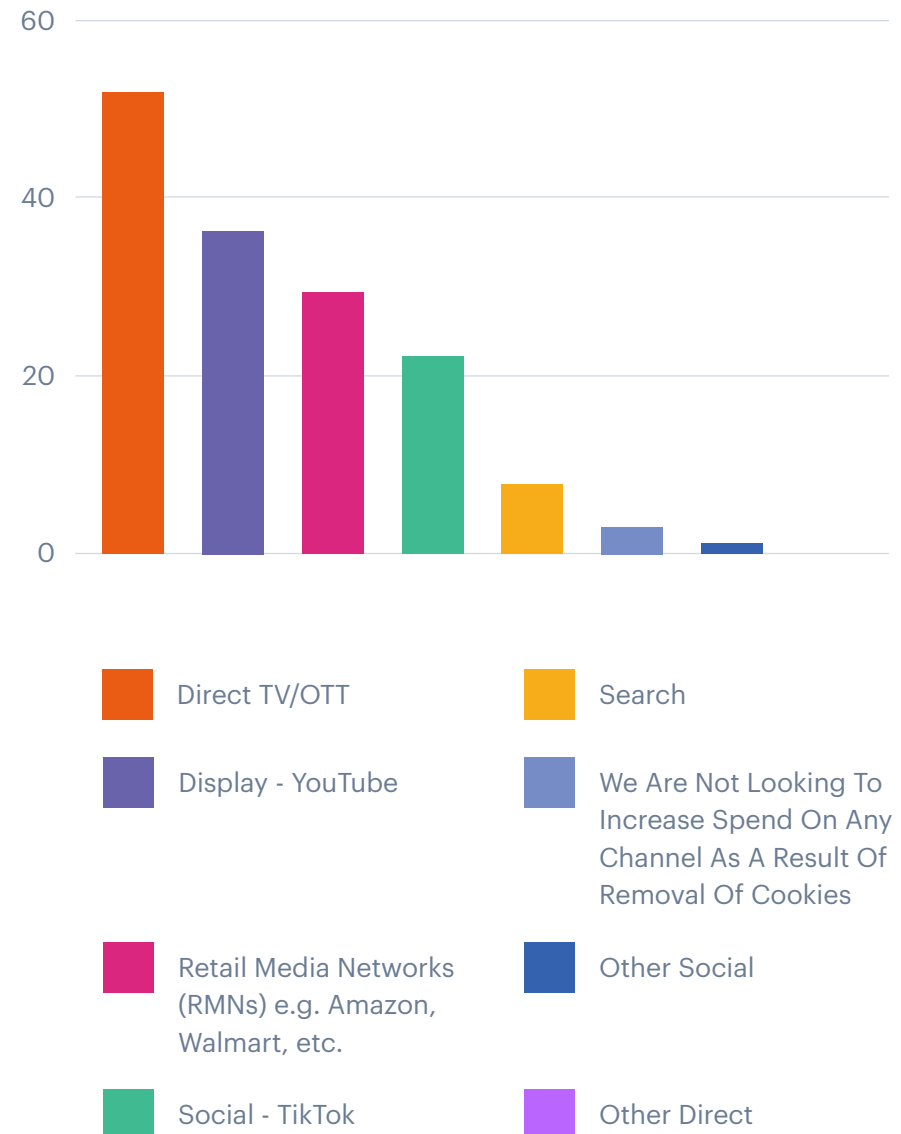
Which channels, if any, are you looking to increase spend on, as a result of the removal of cookies?

A resounding **87% of retail marketers are looking to increase spend on Digital Video**. With well over half of this being spent outside of YouTube (36%) - on Direct TV/OTT (51%).

This is a huge signal that it is finally time for Digital TV to begin to overtake Linear TV as the main medium for reach for traditional marketers.

And data from the IAB seems to bear this out.

Spend in the sector is expected to almost double from £1.17bn in 2021 to £2.31bn by 2026. This is drawn from the fact that, currently, 66% of UK households now use CTV devices and CTV viewing accounts for 28% of all TV viewing by UK adults. For 16-34 year-olds, the number rises to 55%. And the picture in European terms is similar with revenues predicted to **jump from £26bn to a whopping £45bn in 2026.**





The other standout in our survey is the continued growth of Retail Media Networks – with **31% of respondents identifying this as an area for growth.**

Amazon is the most prominent player in this market but **Walmart also made \$2.7bn** selling ads last year. And not only are there others like Target doing similar, Uber expects to make \$1bn as an ad platform next year.

The challenge for brands is that this represents a lot of emerging new ad silos. Silos which need connected attribution and highly accurate cookie-free measurement to ensure that marketers can take advantage of some of the cheaper opportunities while auction volumes are low in these media categories.



87% of retail marketers are looking to increase spend on digital video, of which 51% is Direct TV/OTT.

#17 We asked...

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:
I am looking to expand my marketing activity away from Search and Social,
following the removal of cookies.**

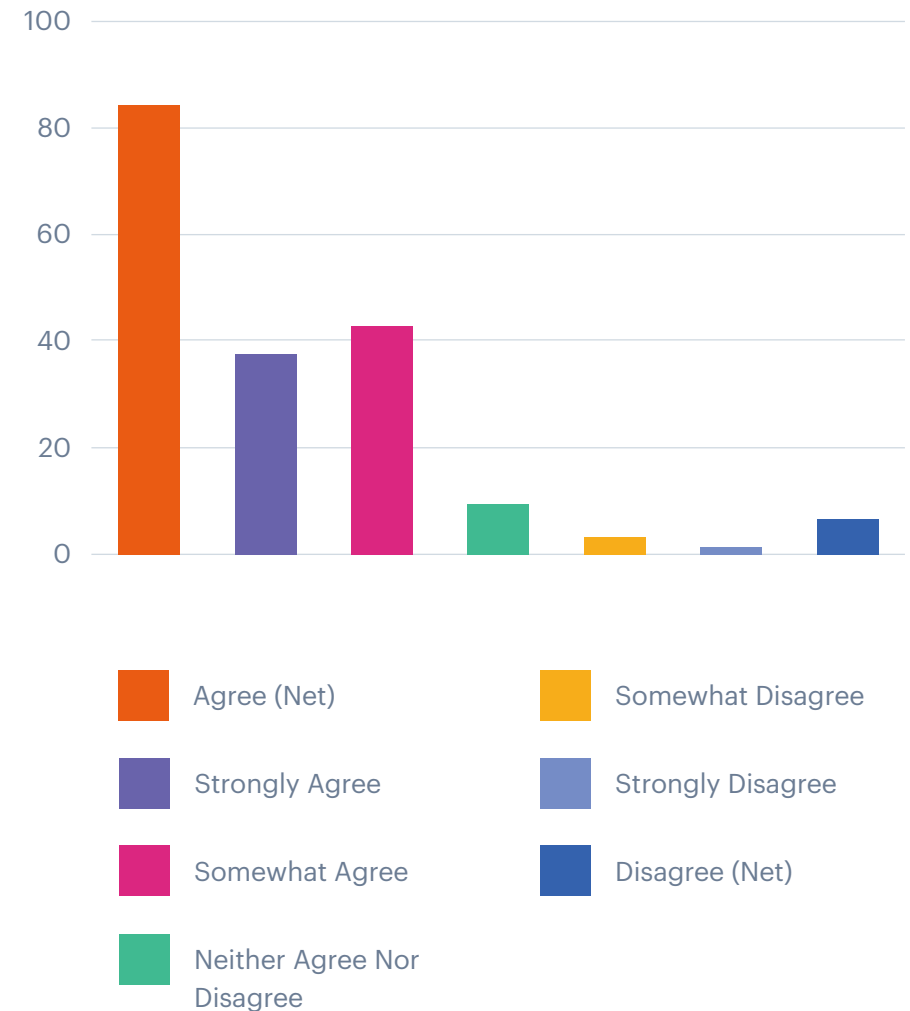
Just under 84% of respondents are indicating that they are looking to move spend into alternative ad spend areas. Which is not surprising given the impending changes coming down the line from Google.

The answer has echoes of Question 16 earlier in the survey. Where there were also strong indications that a big chunk of media spend was shifting into Direct/OTT TV, YouTube Display and Retail Media networks.

The key consideration for brands in this new cookieless world is that effective attribution is essential to unify performance right across your media mix.

And it needs to be cookie-free.

Only this attribution approach can ensure that you can trust the data that is being put in front you, remove bias that can be inherent in single channel reporting and let you tie conversions back to revenue in a way that enables you to drive and influence effective ROI.



#18 We asked...

Do you currently use Data Driven attribution models for measurement & reporting?

It is slightly disappointing to see that only **64% of retail marketers use more sophisticated attribution models**. Even though those models have been available for over a decade.

Part of the reason behind this could well be that, very often, they don't deliver the predictable outcomes you are looking for. So, you take a specific action and then don't get the result you expect.

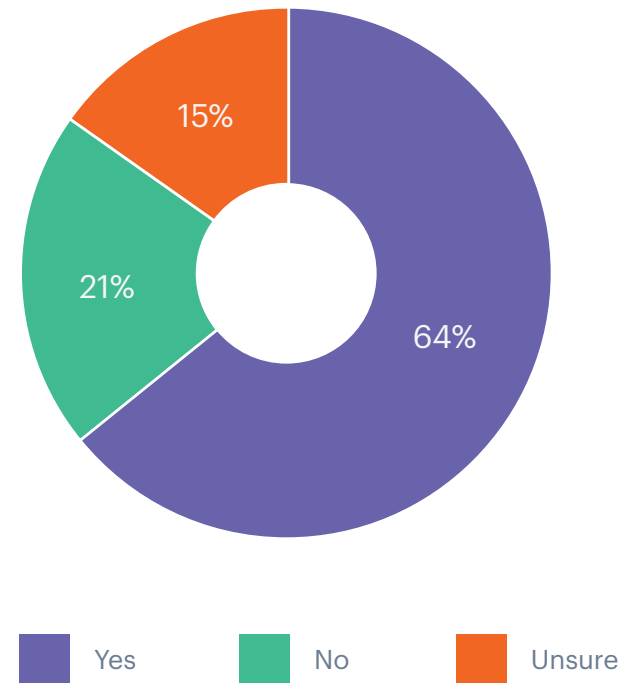
We touched on the root cause of this earlier, which is down to the data from broken sessions that are being used for attribution purposes.

Limitations in the cookie/pixel-based approach to tracking user journeys is at the heart of the issue. Because cookies do a particularly poor job of stitching together data across entire user journeys and conversion paths.

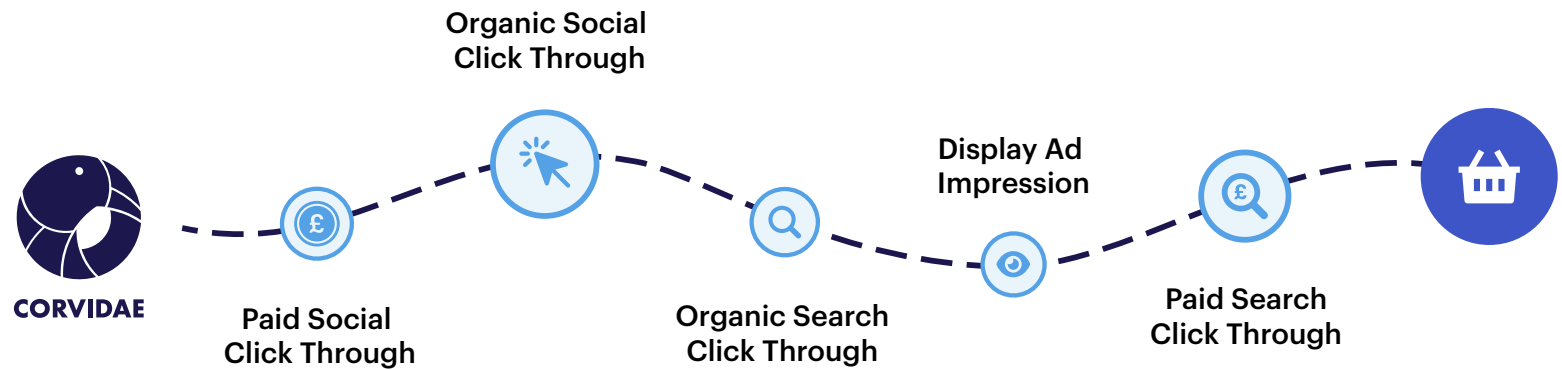
Instead, they only provide partial, session-based analysis.

The extent to which these partial views can really skew your view of what is, and isn't, working in your media mix is laid bare on the following page.

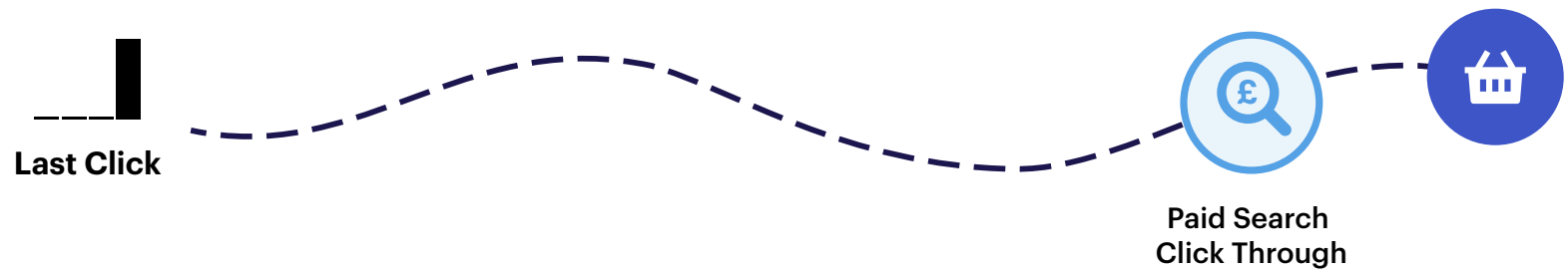
The answer to the issue? Marketers need a **solution that compliantly collects your analytics data**, uses AI to rebuild and unify this data - and identifies complete customer journeys. Attributing value across every touchpoint.



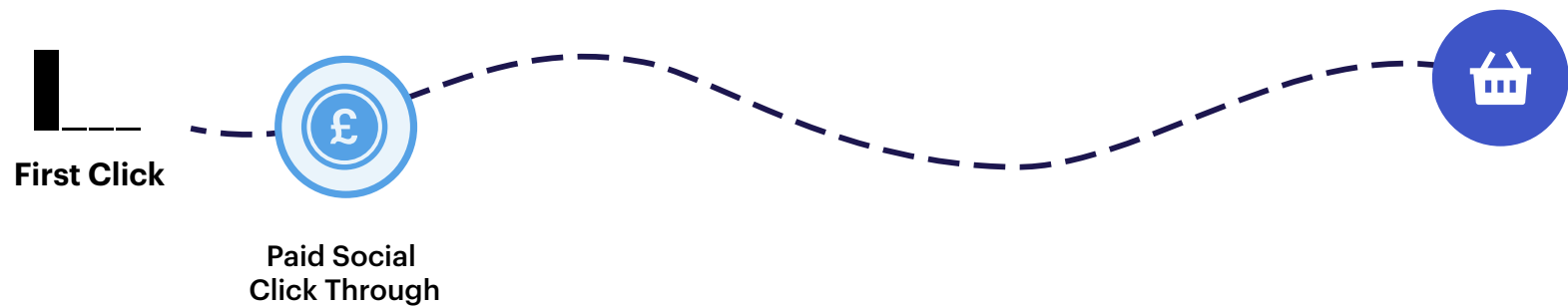
Fair weighting of each touchpoint



All value attributed to last touchpoint



All value attributed to first touchpoint





“The EU ruling against Google will have huge ramifications for our measurement efforts. It’s the perfect time to reassess your MarTech stack and find a compliant alternative.”

- Joe Kavvadias, Sales Director

#19 We asked...

Do you plan to use GA4 given GDPR concerns in Europe, and the demise of third-party cookies?

Indications are that **84% of retail marketers are planning to make the move to GA4.**

For us, this is a damning statistic on the state of web analytics.

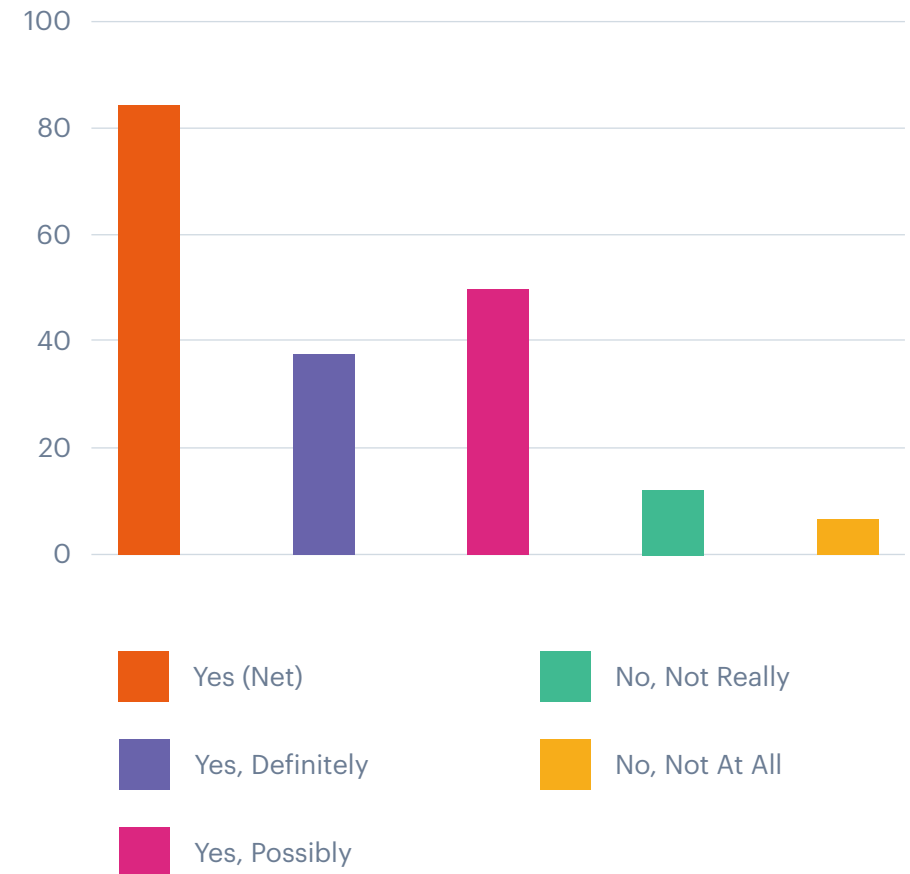
The accelerated, forced requirement for existing Universal Analytics (UA) and GA360 to move to GA4 has its genesis in the **declared illegality of both products in the EU.**

A bandwagon that started with Austrian privacy activist Max Schrems filing a complaint against Google (citing illegality of its GA products from a GDPR perspective) has led to GA being declared illegal in several European countries including Austria, Holland, France and Italy. The issue stems from Google's inability to limit access by

US Law Enforcement officials to data in the EU. Something that contravenes GDPR regulations.

Google's response was to effectively concede that UA and GA360 would remain illegal which led to them insisting that existing users move over to GA4 by 1st July 2023. Which is continuing to cause disruption for GA users. Not least due to the fact that there is no data portability between products.

Which only leaves us scratching our head at the 84% statistic that we opened this section with!



84% of respondents are planning to move to GA4 despite rulings of illegality in the EU.



Can Corvidae help?

It is heartening that our survey results indicate that retail marketers are aware of the importance of finding effective solutions for ad targeting and measurement as they prepare for a cookieless future.

But it is also clear that there is the potential for brands and marketers to unintentionally adopt solutions that have issues around privacy, lack of GDPR compliance, poor data quality and even potential illegality.

At Corvidae, our patented AI technology removes the need for any cookies. And enables you to compliantly collect and measure performance with over 95% accuracy (compared to only 20% accuracy when using cookie-based systems).

The good news? Getting started on the road to accurate, cookieless attribution doesn't have to be complicated. Our team are on-hand to make the move to a new attribution tool as easy as possible.



[Request a demo](#)