IMPACT & COMPLIANCE REPORT 2024

tag

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TAG is the leading global initiative dedicated to fighting fraud, increasing trust, and promoting transparency in the digital advertising industry. In an increasingly complex digital landscape, fraudulent activity and brand safety threats pose significant risks to advertisers, publishers, and consumers alike. TAG's mission is to mitigate these risks through a collaborative, industry-wide approach, helping companies stay ahead of emerging threats and maintain the integrity of the digital ecosystem.

TAG's certification programs provide important benchmarks to improve trust and combat criminal activity within digital advertising. Its catalog of compliance and intelligence tools provide the industry with vital protection, insight and intelligence. The threat-sharing activity taking place within TAG's AdSec Threat Exchange strengthens the global market's collective defense against a myriad of digital threats.

In a first-of-its-kind analysis, the TAG Impact and Compliance Report quantifies the effectiveness of TAG programs and their impact in strengthening the digital advertising supply chain for advertisers, agencies, publishers, and adtech providers.

HIGHLIGHTS & FINDINGS

tag

GLOBAL REACH

TAG Members span
43 countries worldwide.

226 companies held at least **one TAG seal** at the end of 2024.

FRAUD

157 AWARDED

tag CERTIFIED AGAINST FRAUD

A total of 157 companies held TAG's Certified Against Fraud (CAF) Seal at the end of 2024.

39%

Of the total CAF seals earned in 2024, 39% covered digital advertising operations in more than one country.

104 MILLION

TAG's Data Center IP (DCIP) List tool identified more than 104 million unique high-risk IP addresses in 2024.

$10.8 BILLION IN SAVINGS

The first financial impact analysis of the industry's anti-fraud programs -- conducted in partnership with the 4A's, ANA, and IAB -- found those efforts resulted in $10.8 billion in ad fraud savings for U.S. advertisers in 2023 alone.
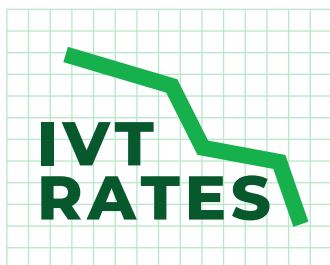
IVT RATES

CAF continued to successfully maintain sub-1% invalid traffic (IVT) rates across TAG Certified Channels (TCC) globally, with the U.S. sustaining this benchmark for the past four years and Europe for six.

BRAND SAFETY

133 AWARDED

A total of 133 companies held TAG's Brand Safety Certified (BSC) Seal by the end of 2024.

48%

Of the total BSC seals earned in 2024, 48% covered global advertising operations.

PIRATE DOMAIN EXCLUSION LIST

TAG expanded its ongoing efforts to defund intellectual property criminals with the launch of a comprehensive pre-bid Pirate Domain Exclusion List (PDEL), a tool that helps advertisers avoid exposure to pirate sites.

KEYWORD EXCLUSION LIST TOOLSET

The launch of the Keyword Exclusion List Toolset (KELT) created a baseline of best practices for brands and agencies to maintain an effective keyword list. By simplifying and standardizing the approach, brands and agencies can expand the range of brand-suitable content, increase user engagement, and reduce unnecessary blocking that reduced ad revenue in the past.

MALVERTISING

A total of 40 companies held TAG's Certified Against Malware (CAM) Seal in 2024, an 8% increase over 2023.

75%

Of the total CAM seals in 2024, 75% covered digital advertising operations in more than one country.

TAG continued to raise the industry's already-high standards against malvertising by expanding the core criteria necessary for anti-malvertising vendors to be recognized with the CAM Seal.

Version 2.0 of the Malvertising Taxonomy was release in April 2024 with considerable updates to both the guiding principles and the examples of malvertising events included and described. The Taxonomy also included new subcategories and additional malvertising techniques, including steganography, browser extensions and hijackers, click-jacking, SEO poisoning, exploit kits and more.

TRANSPARENCY

8% GROWTH

A total of 13 companies help TAG's Certified for Transparency (CFT) Seal in 2024, an 8% increase over 2023.

TAG TrustNet now provides campaign data insights to more than 40 brand advertisers, thanks in part to increased access to log-level data.

22%

INCREASE IN AD SPEND PRODUCTIVITY

ANA's most recent benchmark report - which leveraged transparency data from TAG TrustNet - highlighted a 22% increase in ad spend productivity since its 2023 programmatic transparency study was released. In the context of a $104 billion open web programmatic market place, the increase added $8.2 billion to ad spend productivity.

THREAT SHARING

THREAT SHARING ACTIVITY

In 2024, TAG's AdSec Threat Exchange increased in threat-sharing activity to combat malvertising attacks by 40% over the prior year.

TAG's threat-sharing community has now grown to include practitioners from

11 countries

7 time zones

21.5 hours of human coverage in a typical day

ABOUT TAG

TAG is the leading global initiative dedicated to fighting fraud, increasing trust, and promoting transparency in the digital advertising industry. In an increasingly complex digital landscape, fraudulent activity and brand safety threats pose significant risks to advertisers, publishers, and consumers alike. TAG's mission is to mitigate these risks through a collaborative, industry-wide approach, helping companies stay ahead of emerging threats and maintain the integrity of the digital ecosystem.

Since its inception in 2015, TAG has stood as the industry's shield against fraud and malicious activity. In the decade since, TAG has become a pioneer in compliance, safety, accountability and transparency efforts for the industry. By focusing on threats related to ad fraud, brand safety, malvertising and transparency, TAG has reduced risks and bolstered trust across the supply chain.

Malicious actors don't just hurt businesses; they funnel their profits into criminal activities that harm society. TAG and its members take immense pride in disrupting these schemes, protecting not only the advertising industry but also the broader community.

Today, TAG is more than just a leader; it's a trailblazer. As the first and only Information Sharing and Analysis Organization (ISAO) for digital advertising, designated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, TAG provides a trusted platform for collaboration, threat intelligence, and innovation. Together with its members, TAG is proving that teamwork and vigilance can turn the tide against bad actors.

TAG CERTIFICATIONS

TAG's certification programs provide a framework for compliance, instilling confidence in advertisers and encouraging the adoption of industry best practices. Each of the certification programs has demonstrated its effectiveness in the marketplace through studies and data showing the tangible and beneficial impact of the programs for advertisers, agencies, intermediaries, publishers, and the supply chain at large.

TAG's Due Process for Non-Compliance and Appeal
TAG's Due Process for Non-Compliance and Appeal guidelines is a critical feature of TAG certification programs. The Due Process governs investigations of instances of non-compliance by a TAG certified member, as well as the consequences for findings of non-compliance.

During 2024, together with TAG's Leadership Council and industry partners, TAG streamlined streamlined and enhanced the Due Process guidelines. These updates strengthen TAG's non-compliant investigation and response enforcement, while continuing to provide members with opportunities for remediation and appeal. Companies found not to be compliance with TAG certification requirements may lose their ability to be certified for between six months and five years.

TAG CERTIFICATION

FRAUD

CERTIFIED AGAINST FRAUD (CAF)

Launched in 2016, CAF's mission is to decrease ad fraud activity within digital advertising.

TAG's Certified Against Fraud (CAF) program issued a total of 157 CAF seals at the end of 2024. Of the total CAF seals in effect, 39% covered digital advertising operations in more than one country.

The success of the CAF program in reducing and maintaining low invalid traffic (IVT) rates in TAG Certified Channels (TCCs), where multiple participants have adopted TAG's high anti-fraud standards, has now been documented across more than 20 studies and analyses spanning North America, Europe, and Asia-Pacific.

In the U.S., TAG's programs have held IVT rates in TCCs under the industry goal of 1% for four consecutive years, while European rates have been held under that benchmark for the six past years. Through collaborative industry efforts to raise standards, TAG and its member companies have now achieved predictable, consistent, and low IVT rates in TCCs that can be codified in business contracts and financial expectations.

The first analysis of the financial impact of

Region	IVT in TCC	IVT in NCC
U.S.	0.79%	1.19%
Europe	0.67%	1.76%

2024 IVT Rates in TCC vs Non-Certified Channels (NCCs), U.S. and Europe

the digital advertising industry's collaborative anti-fraud efforts found they saved U.S. advertisers an estimated $10.8 billion in 2023 from IVT, a 92% reduction over the losses that would have occurred without those standards and programs in place.

Conducted by TAG in partnership with the 4A's (American Association of Advertising Agencies), Association of National Advertisers (ANA) and Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB), the 2024 US Ad Fraud Savings Report highlighted the significant and ongoing effect of the industry's anti-fraud initiatives.
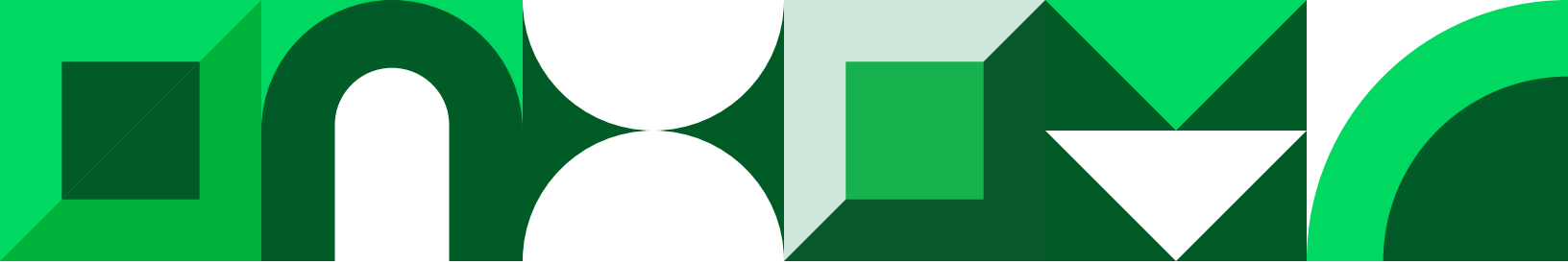
Data Center IP (DCIP) List

The DCIP List helps advertisers identify high-risk IP addresses that could be the origin of IVT, enabling them to avoid spending money on ad impressions that are never seen by legitimate consumers. By providing a regularly updated list of such IP addresses, TAG helps its members prevent fraudulent traffic from disrupting their ad campaigns.

DCIP users have access to the latest IVT intelligence, with the DCIP list having received eight updates during 2024. The scale of the DCIP list is also extraordinary, with 104,349,355 unique IP addresses from 166,640 IPv4 CIDR blocks currently included as potential threat of IVT generated from a data-center.
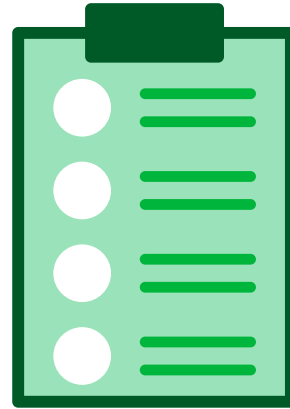
CERTIFIED AGAINST MALWARE (CAM)

Launched in 2014, CAM prevents, mitigates, and remediates malvertising events using digital advertising as an attack vector.

TAG's Certified Against Malware (CAM) program issued a total of 40 CAM Seals in 2024, an 8% increase over 2023. Of the seals in effect, 75% covered digital advertising operations in more than one country.

In 2024, the program expanded the core criteria necessary for anti-malvertising vendors to be recognized for providing effective anti-malvertising services with the CAM Seal.

Malvertising Taxonomy v2.0
TAG released version 2.0 of the Malvertising Taxonomy in 2024, with considerable updates to both the guiding principles and the examples of malvertising events included and described. A new guiding principle was added, stating that the Malvertising Taxonomy is intended to act as a resource across the cybersecurity industry to provide common language around the definition of malvertising and examples of malvertising events. Additionally, TAG clarified that the taxonomy is intended to support and act as a companion to existing frameworks e.g MITRE ATT&CK Framework, Confiant's Malvertising Attack Matrix, etc.

The Taxonomy itself was expanded to include new subcategories and additional malvertising techniques, including steganography, browser extensions and hijackers, click-jacking, SEO poisoning, exploit kits and more.

BRAND SAFETY

tag

BRAND SAFETY CERTIFIED (BSC)

The purpose of the BSC Program is to significantly reduce the risk of ad misplacement on digital media properties.

BRAND SAFETY CERTIFIED

TAG's Brand Safety Certified (BSC) program issued a total of 133 seals issued by the end of 2024, roughly even with the 131 issued a year earlier. Of the seals in effect, 48% covered global advertising operations.

In 2024, BSC updated its anti-piracy requirements to include the filtration of domain-based piracy threats, in addition to mobile-app-based threats.

Pirate Mobile App List (PMAL)

PMAL addresses the issue of mobile piracy by identifying apps that have been removed from app stores (iOS and Android) for intellectual property (IP) infringement but may still be active on individual devices and rogue app stores. By compiling a list of these apps submitted from TAG contributors, TAG helps brands prevent ad spend from flowing to pirate apps and sites, reducing advertiser risk in being associated with those apps while supporting a cleaner, safer digital advertising landscape.

Four releases of PMAL highlighted 15,979 individual apps as threats associated with pirated content or the dissemination of counterfeit goods.

Pirate Domain Exclusion List (PDEL)

Launched in 2024, PDEL is an essential tool for protecting brand safety by identifying and excluding pirate domains that infringe on copyright and intellectual property rights. By helping prevent ads from appearing on sites distributing pirated content, this list empowers advertisers to uphold ethical advertising practices and maintain the integrity of their digital presence. Users can access to the latest anti-piracy intelligence, through PDEL and the list has grown to to include nearly 140,000 website domains that are known to be associated with pirated content.

Keyword Exclusion List Toolset (KELT)

Also launched in 2024, KELT offers a comprehensive solution for managing brand safety through keyword exclusion lists. By standardizing and simplifying the approach to keyword list maintenance, KELT ensures that brands avoid irrelevant or outdated keywords while expanding the reach of their ads to more suitable content. This toolset helps publishers and advertisers optimize ad targeting, reduce unnecessary blocking, and improve revenue efficiency.

TRANSPARENCY

CERTIFIED FOR TRANSPARENCY (CFT)

Launched in 2023, CFT fosters accountability and campaign transparency, creating an "always-on" shared truth for industry stakeholders.

TAG's Certified for Transparency (CFT) Program grew by 8% in 2024 with 13 seals issued to companies by the end-of-year.

TAG TrustNet, a transparency utility that connects and matches impression log-level data (LLD) at scale, saw a 35% surge in the number of TAG member companies providing LLD to their brand clients. With DSPs, there was a 57% increase in LLD access, an 85% increase with SSPs.

In collaboration with the ANA, TAG TrustNet now provides campaign data insights for more than 40 brands. These insights are part of the latest ANA benchmarking study, which includes an analysis of $235 million in ad spend and 38.5 billion impressions across four different channels (desktop, mobile, out-of-home and, now, CTV). Thanks in part to that increased access to LLD, the ANA's most recent benchmarking report noted a 22% increase in ad spend productivity since its 2023 study. Within the context of a $104 billion open web programmatic marketplace, the increase represents an additional $8.2 billion in ad spend productivity.

Pressure from brands to access their campaign log files has been answered by the TAG TrustNet Registry, which is updated quarterly. While most suppliers now offer LLD access, some limitations remain. However, the inclusion of new providers in the Q3 2024 LLD Register - such as AdLook, Equative, TripleLift, Viant, and Yahoo - reflects continued progress in the availability of data that is essential for ensuring transparency.

ADSEC THREAT EXCHANGE

As the first and only Information Sharing and Analysis Organization (ISAO) for the industry, TAG has enabled cross-industry intelligence sharing through the AdSec Threat Exchange. The AdSec Threat Exchange is an initiative through which digital advertising intermediaries and security vendors share intelligence on the latest threats observed in malvertising, pirate content, and adtech cybersecurity, enabling the community to take effective and collaborative action against such threats.

In 2024, TAG's threat-sharing community grew to having practitioners from **11 countries** and spanning **7 time zones**, providing the industry with **21.5 hours of human coverage in a typical day**. The AdSec Threat Exchange also observed a significant **40%+ growth** in threat-sharing activity compared with 2023, quantified by measuring the average engagement levels in communication channels and the quantity of threat intelligence shared.

Industry engagement in the AdSec Treat Exchange has been high, with a cumulative attendance on weekly and monthly threat intelligence calls of more than **450 participants**, while **100% of AdSec Threat Exchange members** have participated in threat-sharing activity.

Threat intelligence shared included:

- **Indicators of Compromise (IoCs) unique to the AdTech ecosystem**
  e.g. creatives, creative ID, DSP, seat ID, advertiser, etc.

- **Ways that users' browsers are being redirected to malicious websites**
  e.g. forced or click-bait

- **Evolving characteristics of malicious landing pages**
  e.g. credential stealing via realistic-looking (but fake) login pages, investment scams, malicious software downloads, etc.

- **Technological advances made by adversaries**
  e.g. use of Artificial Intelligence

- **Real-world events impacting the malvertising threat landscape**
  e.g. global elections in 2024 resulting in disinformation activity
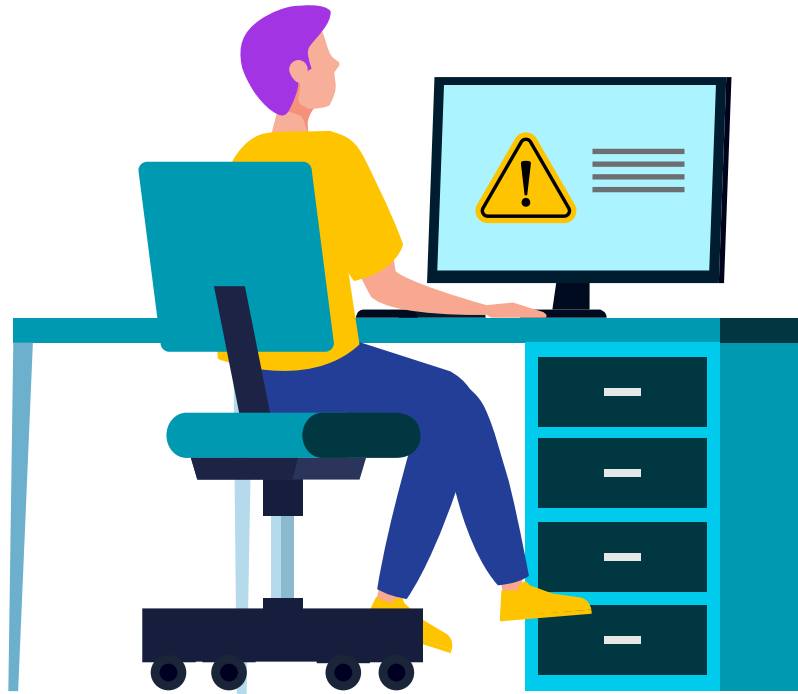
Such industry engagement is having real-world impacts. In April 2024, cybercriminals impersonated several major newspaper brands in the U.S. and UK in advertisements, in order to trick users into clicking those ads to be directed to dangerous websites. Within an hour of the first reported incident in the AdSec Threat Exchange, multiple other companies had identified the same malvertising campaign characteristics in their own networks.

While there were many different creatives used in this malvertising campaign, they appeared to correlate back to only a handful of advertising seats. By rapidly sharing this intelligence with the advertising security community, TAG was able to help its members find and block this malvertising campaign before it could harm users and damage corporate reputations.

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