

Tracking Bad Actors Is the Biggest Ad Quality Challenge

The convoluted nature of ad tracking makes it tough to address issues

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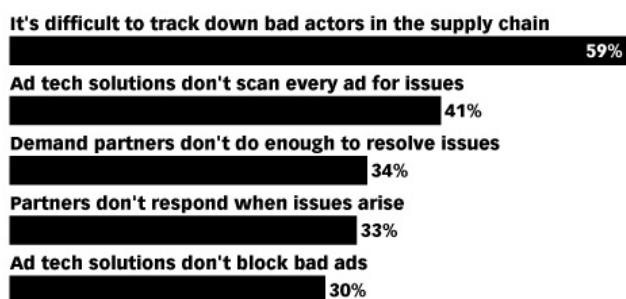
Ross Benes

One of the biggest issues advertisers have with the ad supply chain is that it's too complex. Its convoluted nature allows unscrupulous middlemen to **hide their shady tricks**, and makes it harder to police ad fraud.

In a recent **Ad Lightning** survey of 110 US ad operations professionals, 59% of respondents said that one of the top challenges of addressing ad quality problems is how hard it is to track down bad actors in the supply chain. The second biggest issue? The fact that ad tech solutions don't scan every ad.

Leading Challenges of Addressing Ad Quality Issues According to US Ad Operations Professionals, Jan 2018

% of respondents



Source: Ad Lightning, "The Ad Ops: Top 5 List for 2018," June 5, 2018

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Tracking an ad's route from publisher to advertiser can be like navigating a Byzantine maze, which makes it tough for advertisers to know how much of their money actually ends up in the hands of the publishers they buy inventory from.

After an audit of the programmatic ecosystem in February, GroupM estimated that on average, demand-side platforms (DSPs) and supply-side platforms (SSPs) each **take about a 10% cut of the ad spend** flowing through their platforms. In March, Warc estimated that the "tech tax" **accounted for 55% of all programmatic spend worldwide.**

"The programmatic ecosystem remains the same opaque maze of tangled, leaky pipes as last year and the year before," Ad Lightning researchers wrote.