

ure Tag



# THE STATE OF DIGITAL VENDOR GOVERNANCE

Priva

Analytics

Social Widget





I'd like to introduce you to the first ever State of Digital Vendor Governance - a first-of-its-kind industry survey of this emerging technological space. The burgeoning discipline of digital vendor governance sits squarely between ad and marketing technologies and impacts global companies in retail, travel, financial services, technology and media.

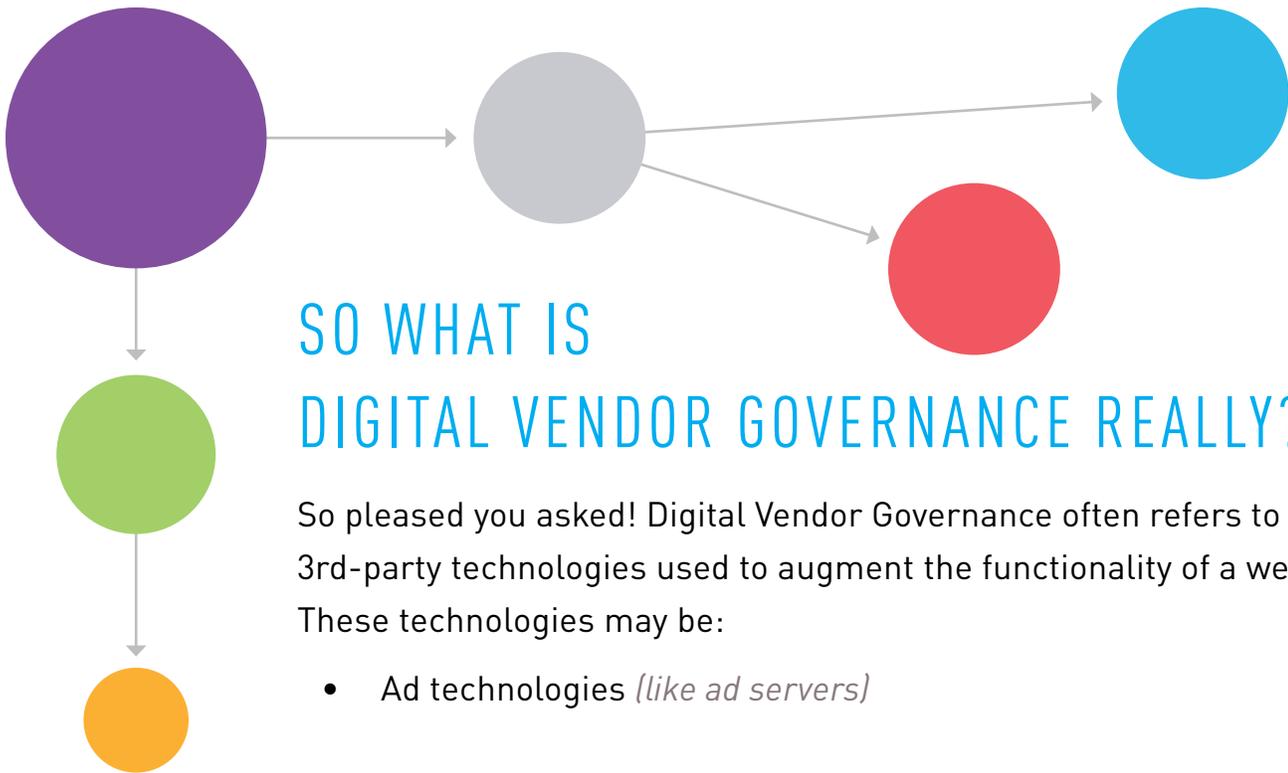
So what brought you here? There is growing interest, and sometimes concern, about how to manage digital vendor technologies - as Scott Brinker from [Chief MarTech](#) puts it:

*"There's more happening backstage, for sure. I guarantee you, more than you expect."*

Perhaps you work in marketing for an eCommerce retailer and are noticing that you're seeing a higher bounce rate from

prospects and a decrease in conversions. Maybe you're on the IT side and are seeing site performance decrease with the addition of new vendor technologies, but can't pinpoint where the problem is coming from. You might be experiencing security issues or data leakage to your competitors.

In any case, you're here - and you're not alone. We were extremely pleased by the positive response to our survey, with respondents taking the time to answer our 25-question battery and leaving thoughtful and detailed replies to the open-ended queries. This research is as much about providing an industry with answers, as with assuring them that they're not crazy - indeed, there are challenges associated with the implementation of new digital vendor technologies and others are seeking solutions as well.



## SO WHAT IS DIGITAL VENDOR GOVERNANCE REALLY?

So pleased you asked! Digital Vendor Governance often refers to the 3rd-party technologies used to augment the functionality of a website. These technologies may be:

- Ad technologies *(like ad servers)*
- Operations and analytics technologies *(like tag and content management)*
- Predictive intelligence *(like data aggregators, retargeters, or demand/supply side platforms)*
- User experience technologies *(like social sharing widgets or comments)*

Very often these technologies take the form of tags - the little injections of javascript that facilitate the variety of increased site capabilities, sometimes added and removed using a tag manager like Google's.

Governance comes in when there are issues - and there can be issues. More specifically, governance is about effectively monitoring these digital resources, which can be difficult, as some go unseen by many IT management tools. Ghostery actually found that large websites have an average of more than 75 digital technologies operating on their site.



## THE TIMES THEY ARE A CHANGING

There's been a change in the way that digital vendor governance has been viewed in the last two years. It's not as if industry leaders and decision makers were ignoring the issue, but rather that it wasn't yet seen as an issue. Industries reacted to individual challenges instead of seeing them under the larger auspices of what they were: a need for a set of standard governance processes and tools.

The importance of digital vendor governance is now coming into the mainstream and yet we still find less than 1% of sites are fully optimized, meaning that they implement proactive data management procedures within the entire organization and across departments. This is a major test. But digital vendor governance will continue to move forward in the future, toward a state where most major companies across these industries take steps to protect their data, user experience, and the performance of their site.



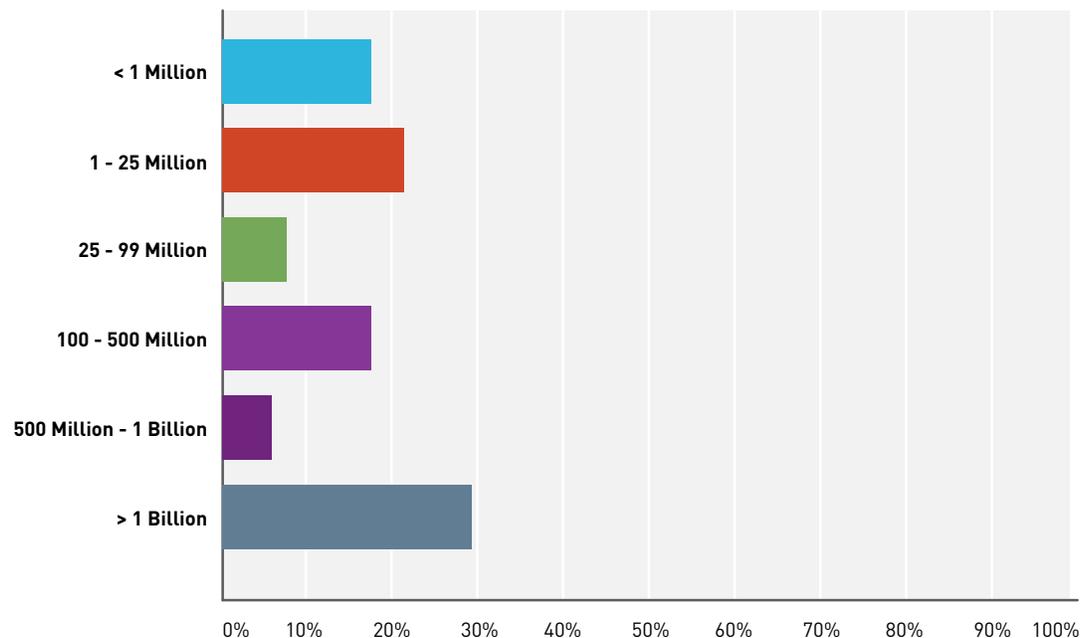
# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## WHAT THIS SURVEY IS MADE OF

### PARTICIPANTS

We were pleased with the breadth of interest in our research from a diverse range of industries. The study was composed of experts from IT and Digital Marketing that ranged from small nonprofits with total assets of just over \$1 million, small private universities with modest endowments, to huge multinationals with annual revenue of over \$50 billion. Those who participated were both clients and non-clients, providing an even broader perspective of the industry.

### Team, Industry, and Annual Revenue (USD).



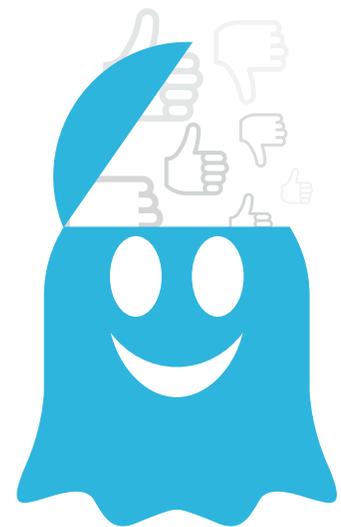
The respondents were from publishing, travel, eCommerce, real estate, education, and technology, from across the US and EU. Those who responded to the research were director level and above, from organizations that ranged from small (up to 50 employees) to large (over 250).

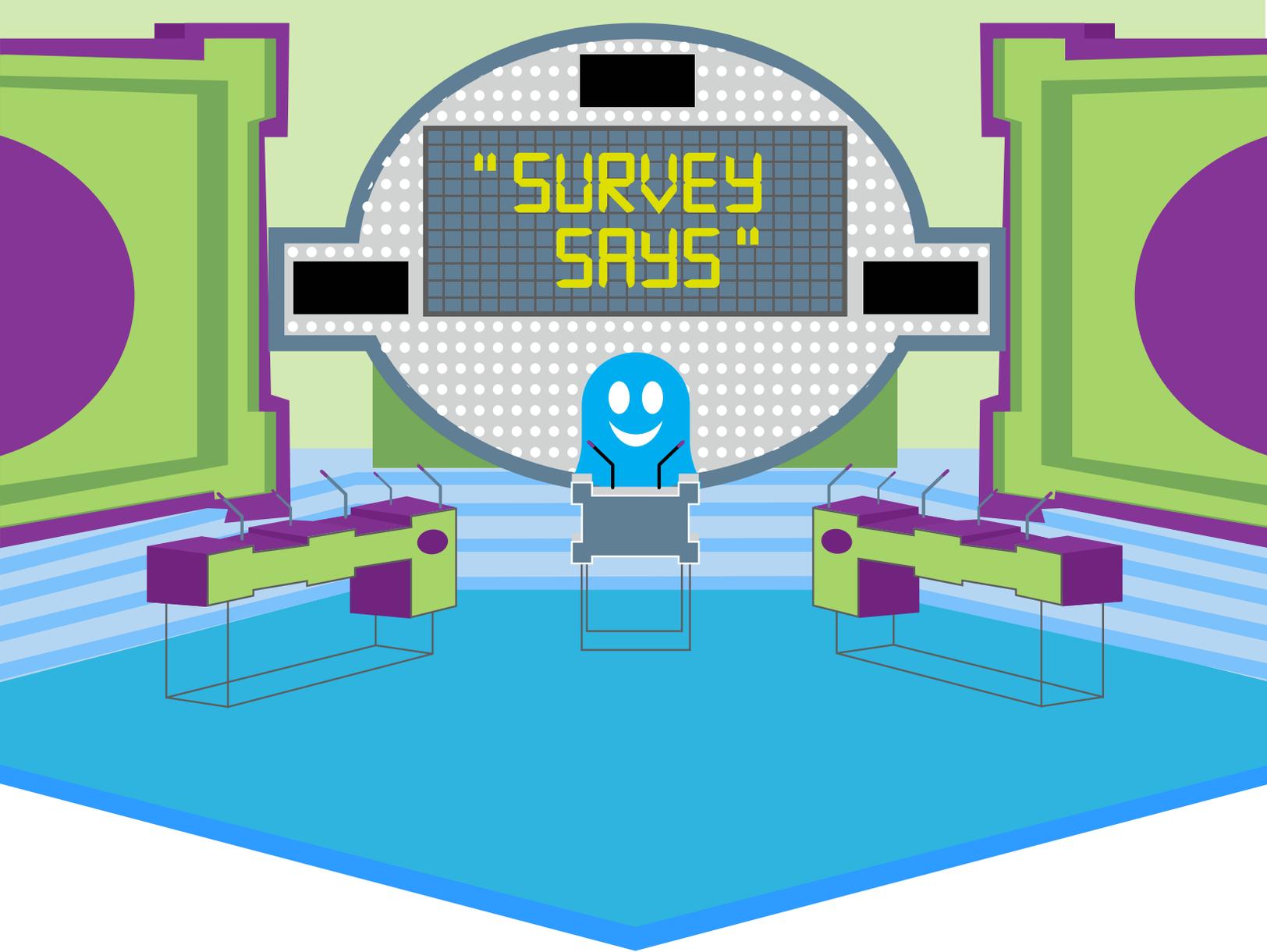
## THE NEED FOR RESEARCH

Facts and figures - there are plenty of them floating around these days, enough that it seems almost any opinion can be supported. So where's the value in another study? The fact is - it's about being closer to our clients and prospects, knowing their concerns, and offering them supporting data. We're always looking for the best ways to manage the intersection between ad and marketing technologies and the most effective way to handle the complexities involved in digital tracking.

We hear from a lot of our new clients that they didn't know where to turn, that they dealt with fallout from digital vendors being mismanaged and unmonitored. When there are challenges it can be isolating - no one is going to their peers with these problems because no organization wants to be seen as anything less than supremely competent. But facing challenges with new technologies doesn't signify incompetence, it's an indicator of innovation and willingness to embrace technological change.

For all of these reasons, it was important to provide a more holistic and comprehensive view of the digital vendor landscape, and specifically what role tags play for others.





## SURVEY SAYS

In that we work with clients all the time who are facing uphill battles with governance, we weren't necessarily expecting to be surprised by the results. We knew issues with governance existed and provide services to resolve some of those concerns.

The strength of the response, however, was overwhelming. Organizations are dealing with tremendous challenges and they're looking wherever they can for answers.

**Let's dig in!**

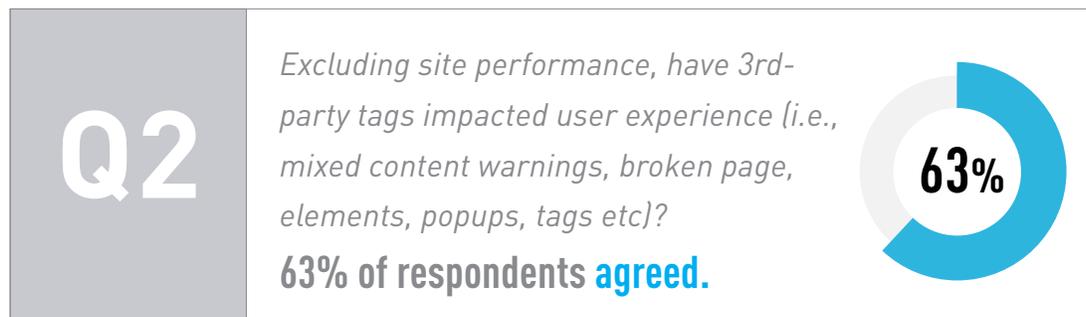
## PERFORMANCE

Website performance is an issue that affects stakeholders in multiple departments - IT teams as much as marketing departments - and has serious business implications, such as decreased conversions. An overwhelming majority of our respondents agree that digital vendor tags have impacted the performance of their site in terms of latency.



## USER EXPERIENCE

User experience is intimately linked to performance. It's been widely reported that shoppers dissatisfied with a site's performance are less likely to buy from the site again and more than half consider a quick-loading page to be important to their loyalty to the site and brand. Our respondents certainly bear this out: a majority, 64%, believe that digital vendor tags impact UX.



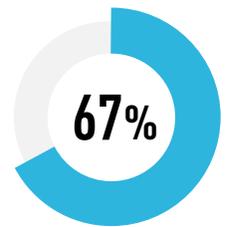
## UNKNOWNNS

There are a number of factors relating to digital vendor governance that are difficult to uncover without a sophisticated monitoring tool, such as the total distinct number of tags on a site. For our participants, it seems a plurality of them recognize that there is technology on their website that they don't even know about.

Q3

*Do you think there are 3rd-party technologies [tags] on your pages that you are unaware of?*

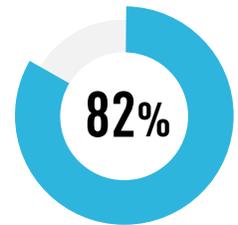
**67% of respondents agreed.**



Q4

*Many 3rd party tags can call additional tags on your site. Is this a concern for you?*

**82% said "yes".**

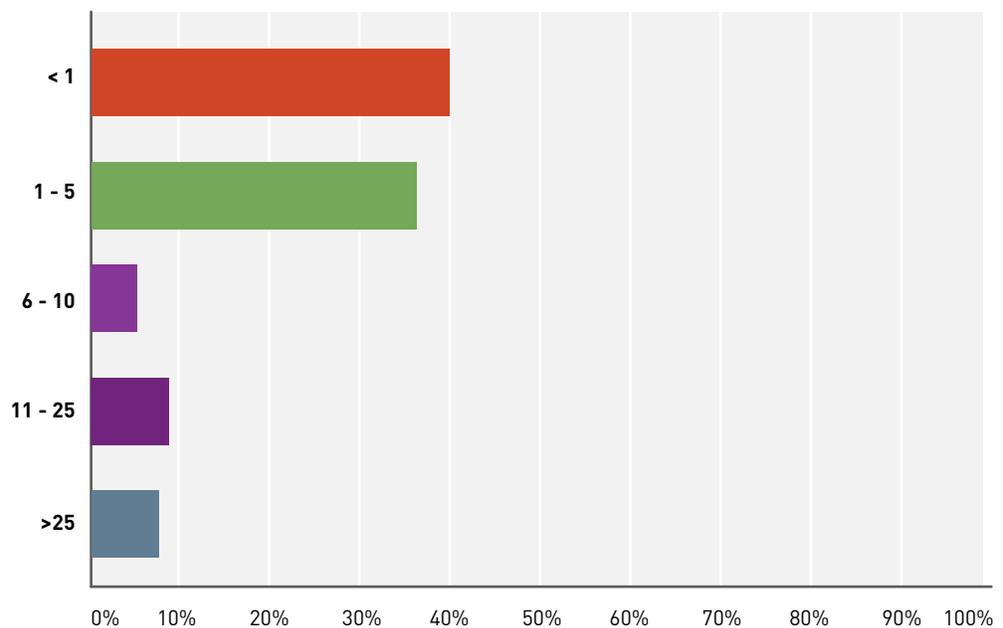


## ISSUES

Complications come up when new technologies are implemented. These can be things related to performance or user experience or they can be more serious, having parts or whole pages of your site disabled, leaking data, or causing tensions among team members. Over a third of our respondents experienced having their site disabled between 1-5 times and over half between 1-15 times.

### Q5

*In the past 12 months, how many issues have you experienced where 3rd party tags have disabled part of your site?*



### Q6

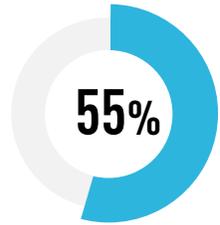
*How do you become aware of customer experience issues?*

Analytics Visual Monitoring Consumer Care  
Testing Team Customer Check Calls Dev  
Email User Feedback

# Q7

*Do you believe that there is some form of data leakage occurring on your site as a result of the 3rd-party technology vendors you use (and the partners they may bring onto your site)?*

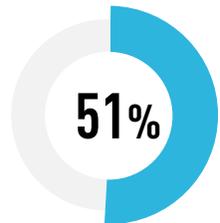
**55% of respondents agree.**



# Q8

*Based on the 3rd-party website vendors we use, my organization is in compliance with North American and EU Privacy Regulations.*

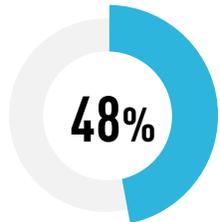
**Only 51% agree.**



# Q9

*Is there tension between IT and Marketing over the performance and management of these technologies?*

**48% say there is a problem.**



# Q10

*What do you think is the cause of tensions between IT and Marketing?*

- **82%** said it was **PERFORMANCE**
- **57%** said it was **OWNERSHIP**
- **43%** said it was **SLAs**
- **43%** said it was **DATA SECURITY**
- **35%** said it was **PREVALANCE OF VENDORS**
- **26%** said it was **DOCUMENTATION**

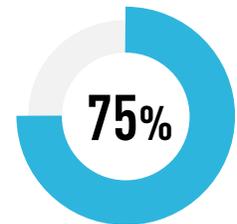
## DIAGNOSIS/RESOLUTION

For many of our respondents, diagnosing issues and resolving them quickly is critical to their business - for a huge multinational, every second of downtime can represent millions lost. For smaller organizations, there is often even less of an operating buffer for lost business. A full three quarters of our respondents check tags as a source for errors with their site.

Q11

*Do you check tags as a source of errors in your standard practice of site error resolution?*

**75% said “yes”.**



Q12

*How do you currently diagnose issues with tags?*

**Sample responses:**

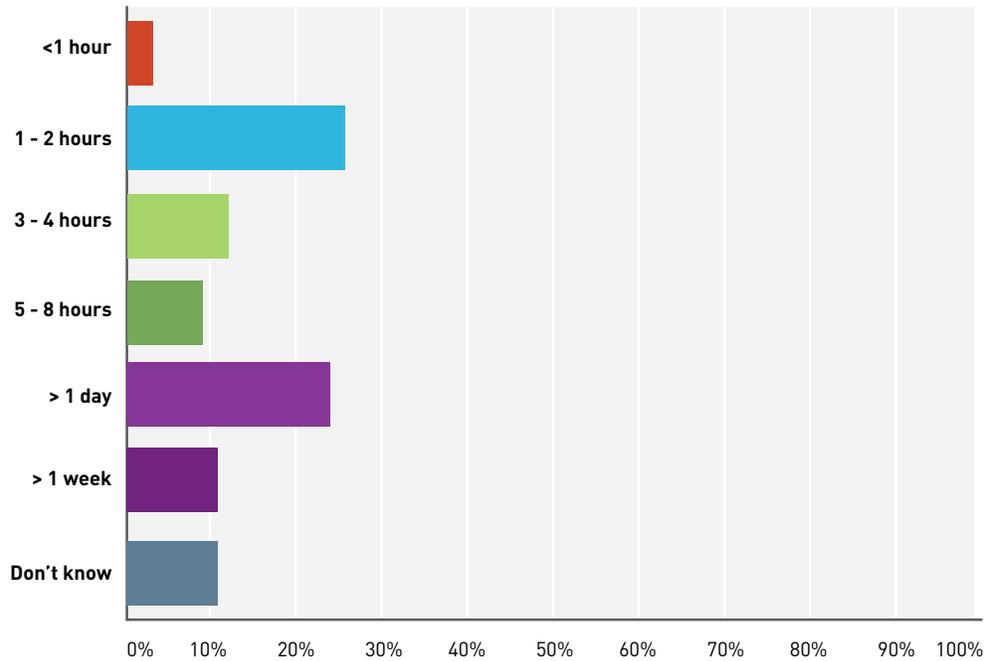
***“MANUALLY...UGH”***

***“TROUBLESHOOT THE ISSUE, ELIMINATING EXTERNAL FACTORS ONE BY ONE. IF THE ISSUE IS RELATED TO A 3RD PARTY TAG WE CONTACT THE AFFECTED PARTIES (IE. OUR ECOMMERCE PLATFORM SUPPORT TEAM AND APPLICABLE THIRD PARTY TAG SUPPLIER’S SUPPORT TEAM) TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE.”***

***“PROCESS FLOW AND WORKING WITH VENDOR”***

# Q13

Typically when there are performance issues with a 3rd-party technology, how long does it take to resolve this issue?



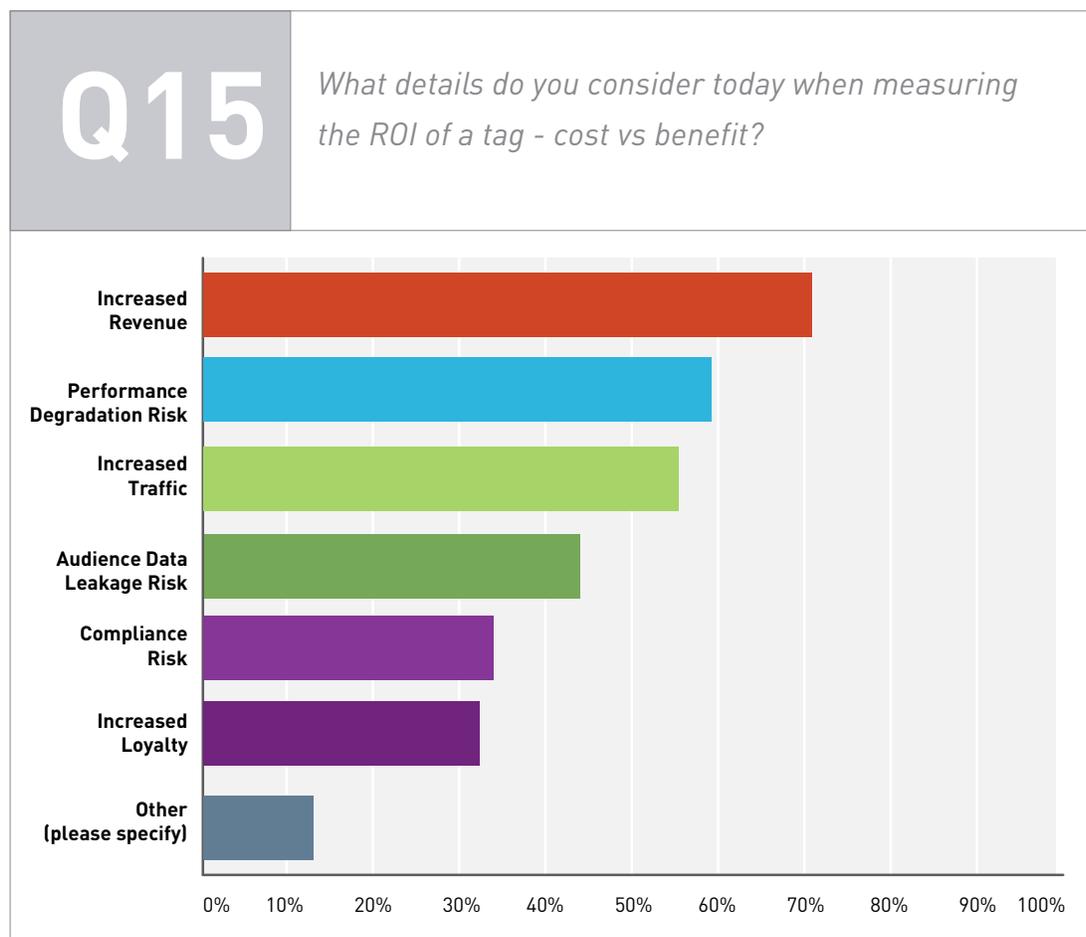
# Q14

What do you think would help solve these challenges?

- **52%** said **INTERNAL STAKEHOLDER TRAINING**
- **43%** said **NEW TECHNOLOGIES**
- **35%** said **NEW GOVERNANCE PROCESSES**
- **26%** said **USER FEEDBACK**

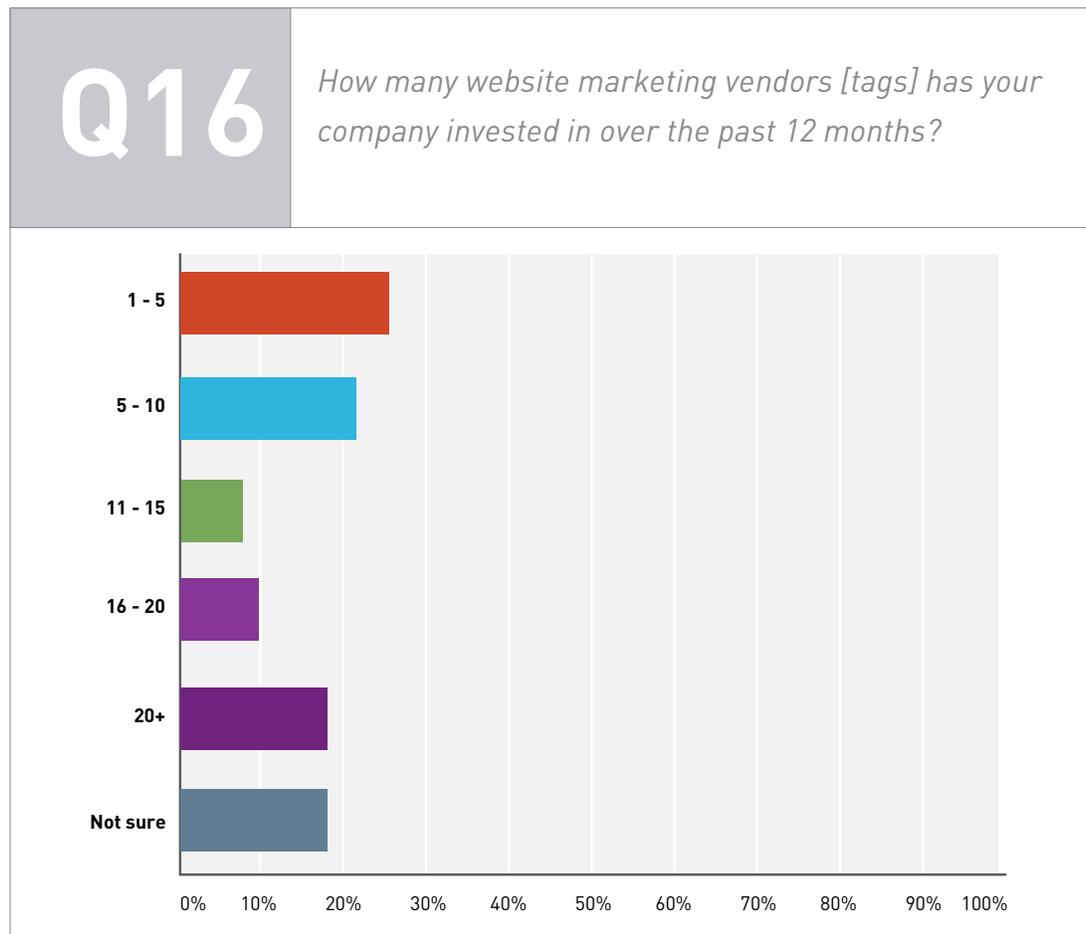
## BENEFITS AND ROI

No matter the size of the company, there's a great deal of discussion surrounding the amount of return on investment for a new digital vendor technology or tag. A tag may be providing extra functionality - be it for social sharing or analytics - but if it's impeding site performance and causing users to abandon shopping carts, for example, the benefit may not be worth the cost.



## GOVERNANCE AND DATA POLICIES

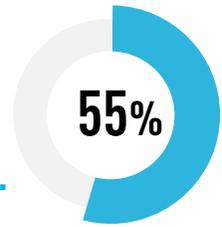
While digital vendor governance as a discipline will continue to mature, there are many across industries who are already considering the state of their data policies and the liabilities to which they may be exposed. Less than half of our respondents have a clear policy on how to vet, implement, monitor, and remove 3rd-party technologies.



## Q18

Who manages the implementation of marketing technology [tags] on your website today?

**55% manage it solely “in-house”.**



## Q19

Why did you Agree/Disagree that “Our team has a clear policy on how to vet, implement, monitor and remove 3rd party technologies.”

Sample responses:

**“WE DON’T.”**

**“I DON’T THINK IT’S SO MUCH OF A POLICY AS IT IS A GAME OF WHACK-A-MOLE.”**

**“WE DO NOT HAVE ONE OUTSIDE OF TESTING FOR POTENTIAL PAGE-DISPLAY OR LATENCY ISSUES.”**

## Q20

Today, where does website data governance responsibility reside with at your company?

**Marketing was the top answer, but not an overwhelming one.**

Sample responses:

**“INFORMALLY WITHIN THE DIGITAL ECOMMERCE TEAM”**

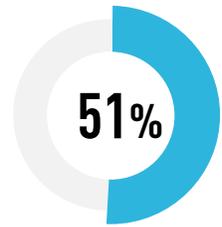
**“BUSINESS AND IT JOINT EFFORT”**

**“WITH MULTIPLE GROUPS”**

# Q21

*Based on the 3rd-party website vendors we use, my organization is in compliance with North American and EU Privacy Regulations.*

**Only 51% agreed.**



## CONCLUSION

Looking at these results, it might be easy to conclude that digital data governance is an insurmountable challenge, and that all companies employing marketing technologies do so at the cost of web performance or security. But this survey probably more accurately reflects the idea that digital data governance is still an emerging discipline, one born out of the explosion of marketing technology over the past several years. And if you are struggling with the best way to vet, implement, and manage tags, you are not alone.

Digital vendor governance is moving forward, and standard governance processes and tools are being established. At some point in the near future, most organizations using marketing technologies will start taking steps to protect their data, user experience, and performance of their websites. If you want to start taking steps to create a digital governance plan for your organization, contact [Ghostery](#) for a free consultation today.

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