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2023 SURVEY REPORT

# DATA PRIVACY AND ETHICS

From the DAA Privacy and Ethics  
Task Force



Our choices today will shape the digital world of tomorrow. Because we practitioners are the closest to the data, the Data Privacy and Ethics Task Force believes that the Digital Analytics Association has not only the opportunity but also the responsibility to demonstrate and uphold ethical data practices.

Because of their expertise and experience, the DAA membership can be a powerful force to drive the adoption of ethical best practices in the use of marketing analytics.

This survey underscores the significance of privacy and ethics in our work and the impact we can have in this area. We encourage you to delve into the survey results, reflect on their relevance to your work, and join the conversation on data privacy and ethics. Your voice matters, regardless of your experience level.



## Opening Letter

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Dear DAA Members and our colleagues in the Web Analytics industry:

We are presenting the results of our first Data Privacy and Ethics Survey, a significant step in our three-year mission to help DAA navigate the intersecting realms of data, privacy, and ethics in web analytics.

In 2020, upon the request of the DAA Board, led at the time by Valerie Kroll and its representative for Data Privacy and Ethics, Aaron Maas, Melinda Byerley was invited to establish The Data Privacy and Ethics Task Force. Cory Underwood soon joined, and along with Amber Zaherchuk, the Task Force initiated its work.


Due to the complexity and uncertainty surrounding Data Privacy and Ethics, our initial focus was to establish a unified approach to our work. We developed a mission statement and a set of core values to guide our endeavors.

The **Mission of the DAA Data Privacy and Ethics Task Force** is to:

Identify, research, and advance the top data privacy and ethics issues through community participation and thought leadership in order to support data analytics practitioners with information, clarity, and best practices.

The core values for us as a Task Force are:

- **Accountability:** We are responsible for our actions, aiming to provide value to DAA members while respecting local and rapidly changing laws.
- **Transparency:** Our methodologies and decision-making processes are clear and accessible to all members
- **Balance:** The DAA encompasses diverse stakeholders, including vendors, consultancies, brands, and sponsors. We strive for solutions considering all perspectives, acknowledging that views on Data Privacy and Ethics can vary due to economic interests and personal values.
- **Practicality:** Despite the abstract nature of Data Privacy and Ethics, our members rely on us for practical assistance in their daily work. As a non-profit organization that relies upon volunteers and has limited resources, our solutions must be feasible to implement.
- **Discipline:** We follow through on our promises, staying focused on our mission and vision.




In 2020, our initial focus was on enhancing the DAA's internal practices. Navigating the challenges posed by the pandemic and the unique needs of a small non-profit, we owe our progress to the dedicated volunteer team, including Courtney Fenstermaker and Mark Redfern, as well as the Implementation Task Force and DAA Executive Director Kimberly Mosley. Their collective efforts have helped DAA achieve a level of compliance befitting its operations.

Our scope has since broadened to include advocacy and education on Data Privacy and Ethics. We have maintained bi-weekly Zoom meetings on Wednesdays, persevering through all challenges, personal and global, for over three years. These spirited interactions have been a source of learning, laughter, and motivation, as well as occasional cupcakes!

This survey, conducted in late 2022, yielded invaluable insights from fellow web analytics professionals. We now have a better understanding of our members' points of view and needs. Despite predating the influence of ChatGPT, and the small sample size, we believe these survey findings gave us sufficient information to create a practical go-forward plan.

Through these findings and our plan, we aim to offer a fresh outlook on navigating the critical field of Data Privacy and Ethics. We hope the shared insights will provide comfort, knowing you're not alone in your challenges. And we hope it will inspire you to join the DAA-and us- in our work.

Our choices today will shape the digital world of tomorrow. Because we practitioners are the closest to the data, the Data Privacy and Ethics Task Force believes that the Digital Analytics Association has not only the opportunity but also the responsibility to demonstrate and uphold ethical data practices. Because of that expertise and experience, the DAA membership can be a powerful force to drive the adoption of ethical best practices in the use of marketing analytics. This survey underscores the significance of privacy and ethics in our work and the impact we can have in this area. We encourage you to delve into the survey results, reflect on their relevance to your work, and join the conversation on data privacy and ethics. Your voice matters, regardless of your experience level.



For DAA members, we urge you to consider joining the Data Privacy and Ethics Task Force or support it by volunteering for the Implementation Task Force. Your participation can directly shape the discourse and influence our industry's future.

If you're not a DAA member, we hope our work aids yours and inspires you to join us in shaping the future of our industry.

Thank you for your commitment to ethical and privacy-conscious practices in web analytics. We eagerly anticipate your feedback, are excited to share our progress, and look forward to continuing this essential conversation with you.

Best,

[Melinda Byerley](#), Fiddlehead Marketing  
[Cory Underwood](#), Search Discovery  
Co-Chairs; Privacy and Ethics Task Force

Kimberly Mosley, Executive Director, Digital Analytics Association

[Courtney Fenstermaker](#), InfoTrust LLC  
[Mark Redfern](#), Lexis-Nexis Risk Solutions  
[Michael Helbling](#), Stacked Analytics  
Task Force Members

## Summary of Survey Process

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In this report, findings were based on completed survey responses from 47 digital analytics professionals, primarily in the United States. This survey was conducted by the DAA's Privacy and Ethics Committee. Responses were collected from September 7 - October 18, 2022, from members and non-members of the DAA, and the survey was distributed mainly through the DAA newsletter and LinkedIn.

Due to a low response rate, this summary of findings will be mainly observational rather than making claims of any correlation or causation between factors.

The committee also acknowledges the risk of selection bias given the topic of the survey but believes that the data is still useful to provide direction on our recommended next steps.



## Key Takeaways

Digital analytics professionals feel privacy is becoming more important and relevant in their day-to-day lives, and they are interested in receiving ongoing education and guidance on how to best respond or get involved from organizations like the Digital Analytics Association.


Two key takeaways were:

### A. This Issue Matters:

1. More than 85% of respondents say data privacy and ethics factor into their role at least regularly. However, while 70% of respondents said data privacy compliance was an issue of critical importance, there is still uncertainty of who “owns” privacy within organizations of all sizes and kinds, as well as how it relates to the respondent’s role directly or indirectly.
2. Senior analytics professionals were more likely to say their personal values were in conflict with their company’s values. Specific issues of concern to most were Data Privacy Compliance, PII, and Ethical Marketing Practices, in that order.
3. Analytics professionals felt the least competent in AI algorithm bias, with 23% indicating a lack of knowledge, compared to 19% regarding cybersecurity and 17% regarding the respect of intellectual property. Given the immediate impact AI is expected to have on the marketing profession in the next few years, the committee believes the problem is urgent and timely, even as we acknowledge the respondents themselves appear to have less interest. However, this survey was deployed before ChatGPT went viral in November, and that may affect perceptions across the board.
4. 80% of respondents were from the United States, but we have no data to suggest this issue is less important outside the United States and is likely to be of far more interest in countries where data privacy is considered a fundamental human right.

B. Data privacy and ethics education is desired and valued. The DAA is well situated and trusted to advocate and educate more moving forward.

5. Education around privacy and ethics is important to these respondents. While we acknowledge the risk of selection bias for people who were interested to begin with, it was evident that:
  - a. Even in this experienced, self-selected group (half of whom had 10 or more years of experience and/or currently worked at an agency/consultancy and/or leadership capacity), people wanted foundational education, including how to get started with privacy and ethics policies, and understanding best practices. Nearly 60% of respondents worked at companies with more than 250 people, where education would be expected but is still not available. This level of enterprise education represents an opportunity for the DAA.

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- b. Notably, industries varied in reported impact on current role. Respondents who worked in education and software vendors were the most likely to say that data privacy and ethics rarely or never impact their role. That being said, everyone in the consultancy/agency, financial, insurance, government, healthcare services, media, and non-profit organizations who responded said the issue was at least of some importance. This further suggests potential areas of targeting.
  - c. Topic areas of interest also include GDPR/local privacy laws and technical changes that impact measurement.
  - d. Respondents want this foundational education in easy-to-digest and practical ways, which the committee believes is on-demand, snack-sized, and asynchronous in most cases vs. the traditional chapter in-person meeting approach. The largest functional area of expertise in respondents was in marketing, suggesting a further area of content exploration and focus.
  - e. Most respondents get this information through a mix of ad-hoc searches, social media posts of varying degrees of trustworthiness, and company-provided resources.
6. *Importantly, both members and non-members agreed that the DAA is currently failing to provide this foundational education around privacy and ethics, and doing so would be a positive action likely to increase and sustain membership.*
- a. Only approximately 12% of respondents felt the DAA is addressing privacy and ethics “well or very well.” Meanwhile, two-thirds of DAA members believed their membership would be at least somewhat more valuable with support/training in privacy/ethics.
  - b. Among non-members who responded, the activity with the highest likelihood to join/rejoin was “data privacy and ethics standards, benchmarks, and certifications.” Other areas of potential activation were “frequent updates on privacy legislation” and “Training on privacy and ethics topics.” Advocating with governments and NGOs was the least likely to entice non-members to join.

## Outcomes and Recommendations:

Upon review of the findings of the survey, the Privacy and Ethics Committee met with the Board of the DAA to share recommendations for next steps, both in the short- and long-term.

These recommendations are summarized as follows:

Recommendation	Short-Term (on or before June 2024)	Long-Term (beyond June 2024)
Lead by example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use ethical technology and business practices as an association.</li> <li>• Provide timely updates to the membership about progress to the roadmap.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish a standard for the organization to hold itself to.</li> <li>• Partner with established legal advisors with specialization in privacy and ethics issues in data.</li> </ul>
Become a trusted hub for resources in data privacy and ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a curated landing page to aggregate resources. This may include member-developed content and resources, as well as content sourced from high-quality third parties.</li> <li>• Host webinars with content on ethics and privacy issues, especially as it pertains to highly regulated industries such as financial, insurance, healthcare, and education.</li> <li>• Ask chapters to consider topics around privacy and ethics at local events. Where possible, record these sessions and make them available on-demand for other chapters and members in other cities to review.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore partnerships with trusted and established organizations that are already thought leaders for privacy and ethics standards.</li> <li>• Develop an on-demand training program for foundational basics in privacy and ethics, including known best practices.</li> <li>• Offer DAA-approved ethics certification, starting with a module within existing training.</li> <li>• Create a process to understand changes to the privacy landscape and update members on the implications.</li> </ul>

As a result, the DAA has already created the curated landing page, which can be found at <https://www.digitalanalyticsassociation.org/privacyandethics>.

Information about upcoming webinars, the process for submitting content to the landing page, and on-demand content will be shared at this location.



# Demographics of Survey Respondents

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## Years of Experience

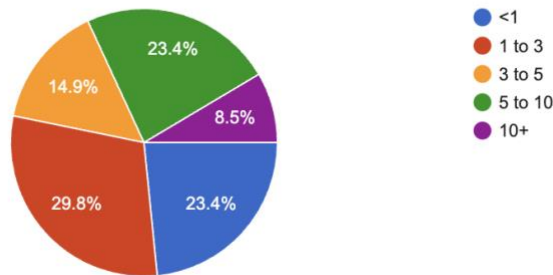
Nearly half of the respondents (48.6%) have worked in marketing analytics for more than 10 years, with the next leading group of respondents with 5-10 years of experience (31.9%). The remaining respondents have worked in marketing analytics for fewer than five years, with four respondents with less than one year of experience.

## Length of Employment

While years of experience trended upward, the survey received a fairly distributed set of respondents based on how long they have worked for their current employer.

How many years have you been in your *current organization*? (Including promotions and job changes)

47 responses



## Organization Types

More than half of respondents (53.2%) work at a consultancy or agency, with 31.9% working for a brand/practitioner. All other organization types received two or fewer respondents, including non-profit, education, vendor, media, financial, insurance, and government.





## Functional Area of Role

Marketing was the top functional area in which respondents worked (15 respondents), followed by IT/engineering (7 respondents), analytics (7 respondents), management/leadership/executive (6 respondents), and legal/compliance (4 respondents). As this question allowed respondents to add their own functional area, this question received 19 unique functional areas, which were summarized in the above analysis.

## Seniority of Role

The majority of respondents are individual contributors with no direct reports. However, of the remaining approximately 57% with some form of leadership responsibility—whether people management or management over the organization—it was a mix of respondents from varying seniority.

What is your level in your organization?

47 responses



## Size of Organization

More than half (58.7%) of respondents work at a company with more than 250 employees. Of the remaining respondents, there was an equal split of respondents working for a company with fewer than 50 employees and respondents working for a company with 50-249 employees.



## Geographic Location

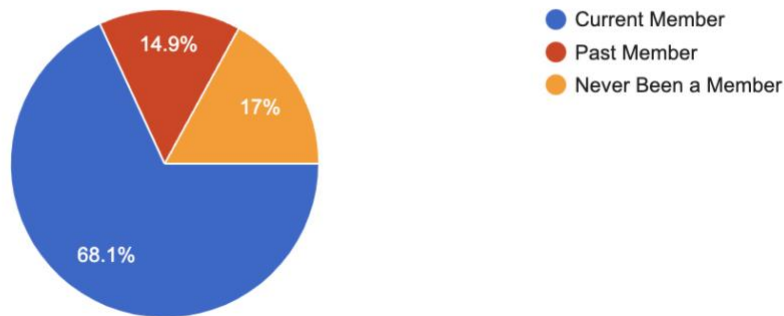
The overwhelming majority of respondents are located in the United States (80.9%). Other countries represented in this survey included Canada, the UK, France, Germany, Spain, Belgium, and Denmark.

## Membership Status with the DAA

Approximately two-thirds of respondents are current members of the DAA, with the remaining respondents being a mix of past members who have never been members of the DAA.

Which of the following best describes your current relationship with the DAA?

47 responses





## Survey Headlines

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### Personal Ethics Often In Conflict With Workplace Ethics, Especially for Senior Practitioners

Approximately 45% of respondents felt their personal ethics were in conflict with the ethics of their workplace. This percentage was higher with individuals with more than 10 years of experience in marketing analytics (50%) compared to those with less than 10 years of experience (40%).

Approximately 19% of respondents who said their organization's ethics policies either occasionally, regularly, or always conflict with their own personal ethical policies said they would not feel comfortable reporting it. However, in total, nearly 78% of respondents said they feel comfortable reporting conflict between their personal ethics and that of their company.

### Individual Involvement in Company Policies for Privacy and Ethics

While 45% of respondents said they feel they contribute to data privacy compliance, only approximately 15% said they are a leader, and 4% said they were a decision-maker in these policies. Additionally, 70% of respondents said data privacy compliance is critically important to them, closely followed by about 66% of respondents saying PII was critically important.

### Perception of Data Privacy and Ethics Issues

The top three chosen aspects of data privacy and ethics by perceived importance in the respondent's current role was data privacy compliance, PII, and ethical marketing practices. Of the 21 respondents who picked ethical marketing practices, eight respondents work in marketing.

### Awareness and Knowledge of Privacy and Ethics Topics

AI algorithm bias was the topic that respondents felt least knowledgeable about, with 23% of respondents indicating that they lacked knowledge. This is followed by approximately 19% who said they lack knowledge about cybersecurity and 17% who lack knowledge about respecting intellectual property.



## Perceptions of Organization's Preparedness

Approximately 36% of respondents said data privacy and ethics factor into their role always or constantly, and 51% said regularly.

The organization types with the highest likelihood to respond that data privacy and ethics factor into their role never or occasionally was education and vendors. There were no respondents from consultancy/agency, financial, insurance, government, healthcare services, media, or non-profit organizations who said data privacy and ethics never or only occasionally factor into their roles.

## Training and Support for Privacy and Ethics Issues

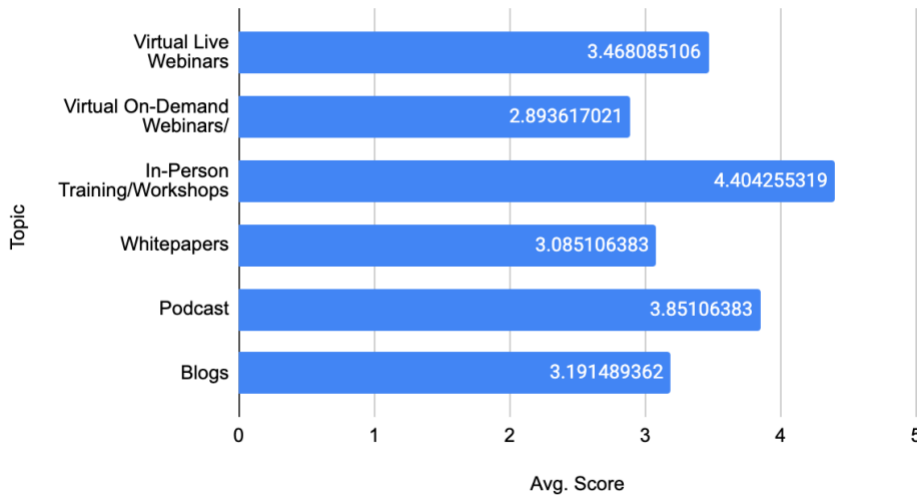
When respondents were asked about how they stay on top of issues in data privacy and ethics, the most common responses were consciously seeking out information through online research, newspapers, and more (33 respondents), consuming content as it showed up in news feeds or on social media (32 respondents), following influencers online (30 respondents), and leveraging company provided education and training (30 respondents).

The top areas that respondents preferred the DAA focus on for training and support were education related to privacy/GDPR/other local laws (26 respondents), best practices and standards for ethical and privacy-centric analytics (21 respondents), and technical changes impacting measurement (19 respondents). Of the provided options, the topics with the least interest were having lawyers speak on topics of ethics and privacy (9 respondents) and artificial intelligence bias (11 respondents).

On a scale of 1-6 (1 being most preferred to 6 being least preferred), the most preferred method was virtual on-demand webinars, with an average score of 2.89. The least preferred was in-person training and workshops.



### Avg. Score vs. Topic



When asked about potential partnerships or collaborations that the DAA should consider with other non-governmental organizations, nearly 60% of respondents were unsure or had no opinion. Of those with an opinion, the International Association of Privacy Professionals (IAPP) was the most preferred, selected by seven respondents.

### Perception of the DAA and DAA Membership

When asking existing DAA members how the DAA is addressing the issues of data privacy and ethics today, approximately 41% of respondents felt unsure, 28% responded “Adequately,” and 19% responded “Poorly.” Approximately 12% felt the DAA is addressing privacy and ethics “Well” or “Very Well.”

Approximately 38% of DAA members felt their membership would be somewhat more valuable with the addition of privacy/ethics training and support. The second leading group was 28%, who felt it would be much more valuable. Two respondents said this would make them members for life, and two respondents felt it would have no change in how they view the value of their DAA membership.

Non-members (either past members or individuals who have never been a member) were asked how certain activities would impact their likelihood to join/rejoin the DAA. The activity with the highest likelihood to join/rejoin was “Data privacy and ethics standards, benchmarks, and certification,” with 11 non-members saying it would make them likely or extremely likely. Activities with higher volumes of “Somewhat Likely” or “Likely” were “Frequent updates on privacy legislation” and “Training on data privacy and ethics topics.” There was a high unlikelihood of joining or rejoining related to activities involving “Advocacy with governments and NGOs on data privacy and ethics (including a partnership with like-minded organizations).”