

10 lessons learned

after implementing an
enterprise-level server-side tracking setup

Who we are



Byrge Leeuwangh

- Technical Web Analyst
- Started analytics with IBM Server Logs
- Enterprise and SMB perspective



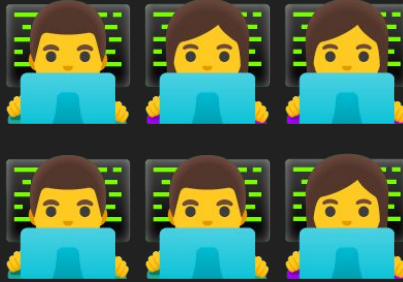
Manuel Valiño

- Technical Web Analyst
- 5+ years experience in data analytics
- Spanish. Amsterdam-based since 2022

The project



**Appliance related
ecommerce**



**30+ people data
department**



**50+ countries with
their particularities**

What we've learned...



1. Time is never enough

Time flies

- It took us months to document exactly what our plans were, who we needed to get on board and which approvals to get

Time flies

- After many meetings with different stakeholders to explain, clarify and get feedback on the project we finally got approval (many months later)...
- ... only then we could start the server-side tracking setup

Lesson learned: Enterprises have processes, structures and policies in place which need to be followed. Plan way in advance

A silver metal briefcase is open, revealing several thick stacks of US one hundred dollar bills. The bills are bundled together with rubber bands. The briefcase is placed on a surface, and several more one hundred dollar bills are scattered around it, some partially overlapping the briefcase's edge. The background is a dark, slightly blurred surface, possibly a table or desk.

2. Find your allies

Who are your sponsors?

- First, why do we do this?
 - Improving campaign attribution (cookie lifetime)
 - Privacy-friendly (clean data before sending to third parties)
 - More accurate data, better insights
 - Reducing time to market for new implementations

Who are your sponsors?

- Ok. But who's going to benefit from it?
 - Marketing
 - Legal
 - Data consumers

Lesson learned: as beneficial as we see the project ourselves, that's not enough. Find sponsors that make the project come to life

A top-down view of several people's hands stacked together in a circle on a dark wooden table. The hands are of various skin tones and are wearing different colored sleeves: brown, purple, black, and grey. In the background, there are scattered papers with charts and graphs, and a laptop is partially visible on the right side. A white rectangular box with black text is overlaid in the center of the image.

3. May the (task) force be with you

A team of teams

- The tracking team cannot accomplish this project by itself
- All relevant departments need to sit at the same table. But how?

A team of teams

- Welcome to the task force!
- We came up with a team of teams, with its own leadership and structure
 - Easier communication
 - Easier to prioritize this special project

Lesson learned: providing the project with structure and processes minimizes the risk of failure. Think of setting up a task force

A photograph of a modern office interior, showing a hallway with grey walls and a white ceiling. The ceiling has several recessed light fixtures and exit signs. The floor is a light-colored, textured material. A white text overlay is centered in the image, containing the text "4. If you can't explain it to a 6 year-old...".

4. If you can't explain it to a 6 year-old...

Are we on the same page?

- Initially, we were not on the same page at the technical level with sponsors and stakeholders. There was noise and misunderstanding
- Example: is it server-side tagging or server-side tracking? Or both? What's the difference?

Lesson learned: This is a technical subject. Be clear and consistent on terms and definitions, don't leave room for misinterpretations



5. Document everything

komt nu al weer
in vliegving, naar he.
ik vind het zo leed.
te heb bij jullie nog
vrijdag. Nu Dag
hoor.

Ik vind je me niet
hallo goed begin
vrijdag 11 Oct 20. Dan
ik maar niet zeg
hoor. Hering
vrijdag 11 Oct 20
11 Oct 20
11 Oct 20

Argh, documentation

- Nobody likes to spend time documenting. Why does it matter anyway?
 - Documentation is the compass
 - It clarifies the expectations and expected outcome(s)
 - It should not take things for granted

Argh, documentation

- Requesting implementations and working on the documentation in parallel **does not work**.
Documentation is a prerequisite

Lesson learned: take documentation seriously.
Start early and keep it up-to-date

WEEK 3 : Design

TRD Final
Hosting & Staging Recs

Hosting & Staging Setup

Finalize API Goals

Infrastructure Recs:
- Laravel + Backbone

PLEASE DO NOT ERASE

WEEK 4 : Design

Initialize Database

Normalize Database

Create Fixtures

← Create Fixtures for testing

6. Learn the art of flexible roadmapping

WEEK 5 : Design

B/E Form work

<Continues

B/E Sorting (for All Dashboard Views) w/ pagination

B/E Filter (for all views)

B/E Crud for all DB Tables

Exporting

Admin Login / Recs flow
Admin Logout flow
Admin Dashboard flow
Admin Profile flow

WEEK 6 : Dev

ADMIN API

CRON
Admin (and) email B/E

Admin Dashboard Service flow & error
Admin Dashboard flow error
Admin Dashboard flow success
Admin Profile flow error

Admin Profile flow error
Admin Profile flow success
Admin Profile flow error
Admin Profile flow success

Plan ahead... but don't write it in stone

- Roadmaps are useful for
 - Managing stakeholder expectations
 - Align across teams
 - Set milestones and deadlines
 - Visualize dependencies

Plan ahead... but don't write it in stone

- But they should leave room for
 - Unexpected issues
 - Delays
 - Additional processes
 - Changes in sponsors and priorities

Lesson learned: do plan but be aware that things change, *c'est la vie*



7. Scope things globally

One size fits all

- The challenges of the enterprise setup
 - All over the world
 - Built on multiple ecommerce platforms
 - With a global strategy, but **different times to market**

One size fits all

- A global approach from the start saves time and efforts
- It makes the setup more consistent, future-proof and less error prone

Lesson learned: think of global solutions, aim at a setup that works cross-platform



8. Test, test and test again

Test as if there was no tomorrow

- Data checks and validation should be done every step of the project: don't wait til the end

Test as if there was no tomorrow

- It's almost impossible to account for each and every possible scenario
- But the more you test, the more chances to spot potential issues
- Automation makes your life easier (still work in progress for us)

Lesson learned: Think you test enough?
Think again. The 😈 is in the details



9. Stick to the rules

Legal matters

- Enterprises operate in multiple regions and markets, subject to different regulations
- A server-side setup likely means information is stored differently (cookie names, lifetime)

Legal matters

- This needs consideration and action from Legal
 - Understand the consequences of the implementation
 - Accept or reject the risks
 - Update the website policies

Lesson learned: decisions made by Legal have implications on the setup. Make your stakeholders aware

10. Make friends, no foes



How to become best buddies

- Cooperation is key to make the project happen
 - Sit together with the developers: you'll need them often
 - Be transparent, update and involve other teams
 - But also pair with your teammates from Tracking, share knowledge, troubleshoot and discuss implementation choices

How to become best buddies

- Establish long-term partnerships
 - Make sure people can count on you
 - Be clear on what you expect from others

Lesson learned: share ownership of the project, trust your colleagues and work closely together. One for all, all for one

T H E
E N D