# 10 lessons learned

after implementing an
enterprise-level server-side tracking setup

Byrge Leeuwangh | Manuel Valiño

DDMA 2024. Amsterdam

# Who we are

## Byrge Leeuwangh

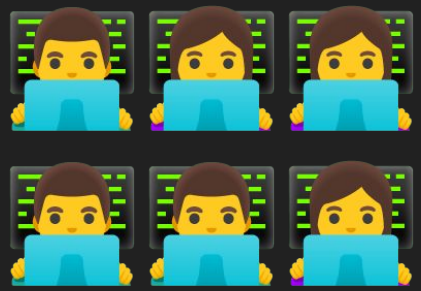
- Technical Web Analyst
- Started analytics with IBM Server Logs
- Enterprise and SMB perspective

## 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

# 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

# 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

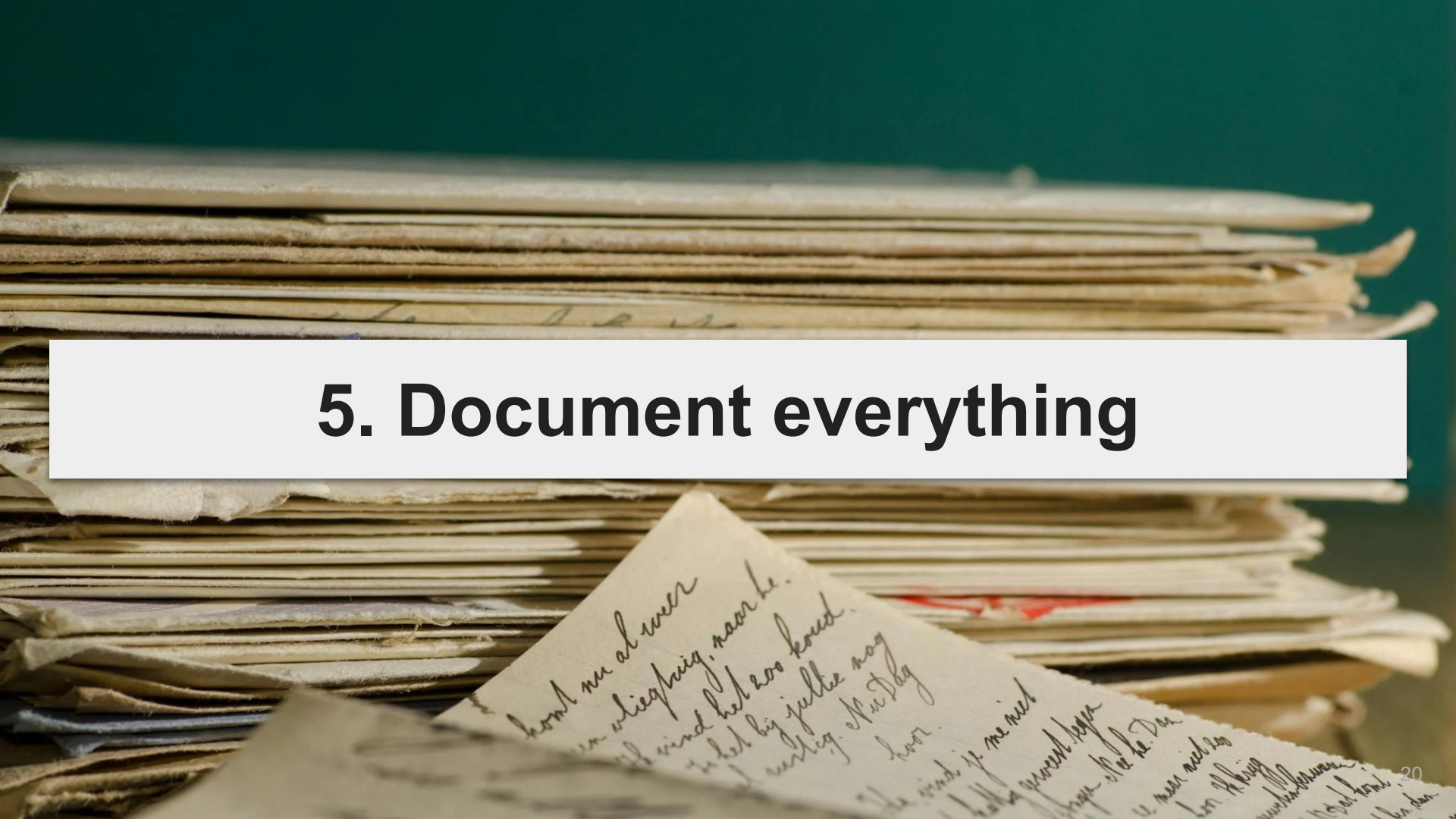
# 4. If you can't explain it to a 6 year-old…

# 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

# 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

# 6. Learn the art of flexible roadmapping

# 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

THE
END