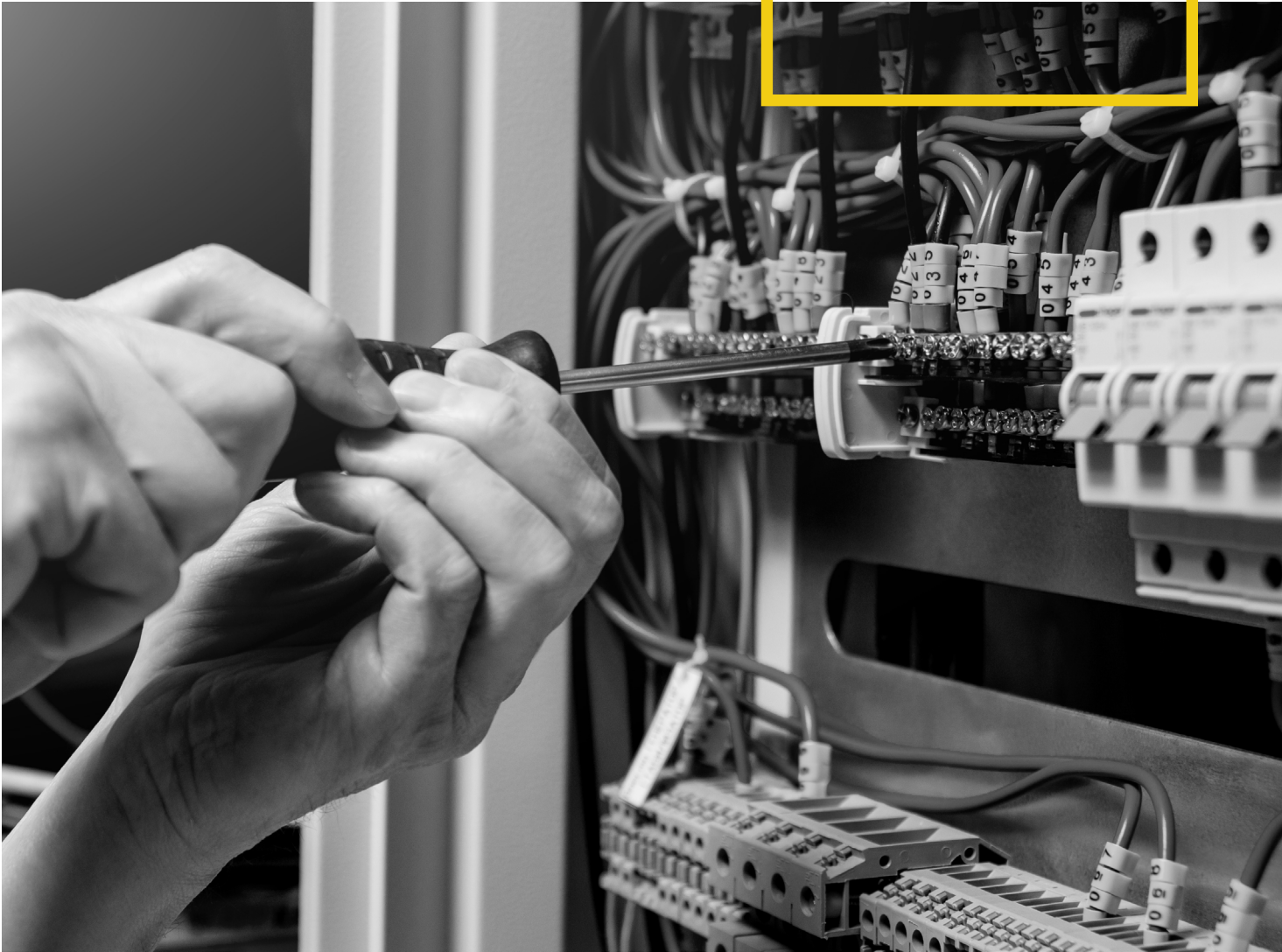**ObservePoint**

RS Components Tests Their Analytics Data at Every Release with ObservePoint

Challenges:

- Needed a scalable way to test their analytics at each release
- Wanted to implement governance over tag management usage
- Relied heavily on manual testing to test their implementations

Key Product Used:

Technology Governance, specifically:

- Audits
- Journeys
- Rules

Results:

- Eliminated 7 hours of testing for every release (every 3 weeks)
- Began discovering errors pre-release, thus avoiding data loss
- Increased confidence in analytics data among stakeholders

RS Components Digital Profile

500k products

70% digital sales share

100m visits to their sites each year

£ 1bn digital sales annually

Originally founded in 1937 as a supplier of spare radio parts, RS Components has grown to become one of the top distributors of electronics and maintenance products in the world.

Despite their size, RS Components has remained nimble, leading their industry in innovation since founding more than 80 years prior. For example, they were the first distributor to offer next-day delivery (1937), the first catalogue distributor to produce a CD-ROM version of their catalogue (1995), and the first in their industry to provide a transactional website (1998).

Adding to their portfolio of innovation, RS Components was an early adopter of ObservePoint, an enterprise-grade analytics testing and data governance solution. Over the past several years, RS Components has used ObservePoint to implement a robust analytics testing strategy that has enabled them to find analytics errors early, giving them peace of mind and building confidence in analytics data quality.

Implementing Regular Release Validation

One of the biggest successes RS Components has achieved with ObservePoint is their operationalizing of regular release validation.

Release validation involves testing your analytics implementation at each release (i.e. any update to your site or analytics tracking) in order to verify that recent changes didn't affect the integrity of your data collection. In the same way you would test each new product release to make sure everything functions properly, RS Components uses ObservePoint's Audit and Journey features to scan batches and sequences of pages to make sure analytics data is being collected correctly.

Regarding their release validation strategy, Head of Data Experience Solutions Tom Loomes says,

> *"The key thing for us is around our regular tag release cycles. We push new releases and tags every three weeks. ObservePoint has become an integral part of that in terms of making sure that we're not breaking anything and that we're keeping data quality intact."*

Release validation is a common use case among ObservePoint users, and for most companies wouldn't be possible without ObservePoint due to the high cost and risk of manual testing. In the case of RS Components, they have been able to eliminate a 7-hour manual testing process every three weeks and even expand their testing capabilities beyond what they could test before.

Angus Gough, an analytics implementation and tagging engineer at RS Components, says that their release validation strategy has given the team peace of mind when it comes to the integrity of their implementation.

> *"It's a fail-safe, preventative practice that we use when we do our releases and I'm more confident because we've got ObservePoint."*

FEATURE HIGHLIGHT: RULES

The Rules feature is what makes RS Components' release validation strategy possible. Using Rules, ObservePoint users can define expected values for data collection on any given page or section of a site. If during a scan a rule doesn't pass, they immediately receive a notification.
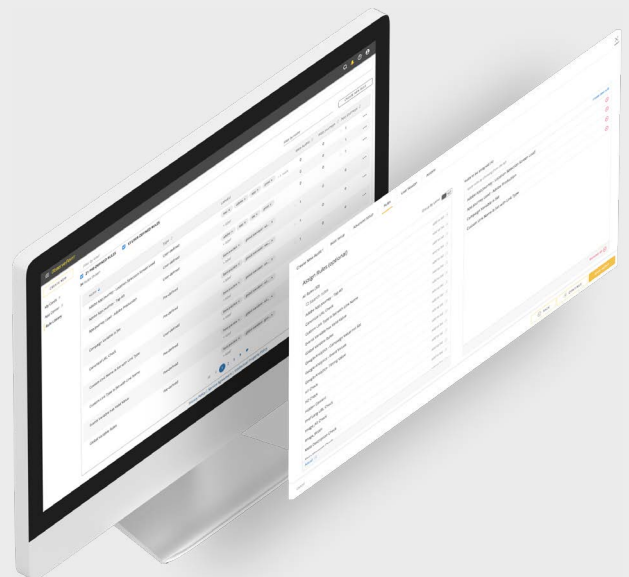
Finding Analytics Errors in Pre-Production

With the help of ObservePoint, RS Components has been able to discover analytics errors earlier and earlier in the development cycle.

Angus outlined their strategy as follows:

"When we develop new tags for the website, we put them into a pre-production environment and that gives us an opportunity to test ourselves, to make sure that we're not breaking anything that's already there and that all the values are correct. ObservePoint is part of that process."

> *"We can set ObservePoint to scan through the whole site and make sure that there are no inconsistencies or changes in what we had there before."*

Companies like RS Components use pre-production environments as a testing ground for their analytics tech to identify any errors. ObservePoint is able to scan implementations in these secure development environments, making analytics testing even more proactive and preventative.

Increasing Efficiency Throughout the Organization

Since they adopted ObservePoint, the Digital Experience Solutions team at RS Components has been more than self-sufficient when it comes to analytics testing. Through automation, they've eliminated tedious work and become more efficient.

In a recent example, Tom Loomes and his team noticed some data loss related to a conflict in the checkout path on their site. Rather than relying wholly on their engineering and technology team to find the problem, they initiated an ObservePoint scan using Journeys that replicated the checkout path from beginning to end. This Journey allowed them to track the issue step by step, ultimately identifying that the Adobe tag wasn't firing at all.

Tom and his team have even used ObservePoint to help eliminate inefficient manual testing on teams other than their own.

Regarding a recent project, Tom said, "We were using ObservePoint for an issue on the order confirmation page recently and our engineers wanted to manually test everything—they wanted to build out each testing scenario and walk through them individually. We decided instead to deploy ObservePoint to automatically perform these tests." By using ObservePoint, Tom was able to keep valuable human resources focused on more important tasks.

Building Confidence in Data and Better Customer Experiences

When he first joined RS Components, Angus saw the immediate benefit of ObservePoint. He said, "The job I came from, I spent maybe 70 percent of my time checking through things on the website, and checking thoroughly as well because there were so many instances where the right edge cases on the website would cause something to break. So it's really refreshing to not have to worry so much about that now and to be able to get on with more important jobs."

> *"I spent maybe 70% of my time checking through things on the website...It's really refreshing to not have to worry so much about that now and to be able to get on with more important jobs."*

By using ObservePoint, RS Components has been able to reallocate their time from manual testing and confidently focus on using their data to improve customer experiences.

Looking to the future, Tom hopes to further develop their ObservePoint capabilities to strengthen the integrity of their data. He said,

> *"I think it's about continuing those activities and starting to look more so now at how we can use ObservePoint even more going forward."*

What RS Components' testing strategy looks like:

1. **Daily Audits on key sections of their site to validate Adobe Analytics variables**

2. **Daily Journeys covering key user journeys e.g. checkout process and search**

3. **Post-release testing**

4. **Whitelisted third party Audits across the whole site**