**Click Farms And Click Fraud**

**We bring many interesting issues to light that people are generally unaware of while working online. Lesson Seven is on Click Fraud prevention and how to reduce your advertising costs online.**

**Lesson Seven - Click Farms And Click Fraud**

**It is surprising few people are aware of click farms and how they drive up the cost of advertising for organizations. This Lesson Plan educates you on what they are, how click farms increase your marketing costs, and how to eliminate click fraud while advertising your brand and services.**

A click farm is made of people hired to click on paid advertising links. Low paid workers click the links, surf the target website to drive up the cost of advertising for advertisers. It is “not illegal” anywhere in the world.

Click fraud is becoming a huge problem for Pay-Per-Click (PPC) advertising customers. It is estimated that anywhere between 25% to 37% are invalid clicks generated by click fraud farms with varying degrees of sophistication utilizing programmed scripts (bots) or real people.

**Web Crawlers And Scrapers**

**What are these?**

Scripts(bots) are designed to crawl and scrape websites with the objective of collecting, indexing and cataloging data. Many invalid clicks are driven by web crawlers and scrapers tasked with collecting and indexing data.

**How does this happen?**

Search engines, travel aggregators, shopping sites and price comparison sites often deploy bots to scrape competing or affiliated sites for the purpose of data collection, real-time price adjustment and a variety of other reasons. These bot clicks are added to the advertiser’s remarketing audience and get retargeted, causing additional marketing cost/loss. They eat up your advertising dollars with no real return.

**Automated Click Fraud**

**What is automated click fraud?**

Hacker generated scripts (bots) are designed to mimic legitimate human traffic and perform actions which are tied to ad-spend like views, clicks, form fills, purchases.

**How does this happen?**

The organization getting paid for the action on your site increases their ad revenue by fraudulently inflating your traffic. It could be an ad network, a publisher or any party interested in inflating the numbers to drive up your ad costs. These automated bots are very sophisticated and are often hard to catch and remove.

**Manual Click Fraud**

**What is manual click fraud?**

People manually generate clicks on your ads to inflate traffic to your site. An individual or business competitor can hire a click farm to maliciously drain your ad budget. This is click fraud which increases your ad costs and the amount of revenue organizations receive for advertising your brand and services.

Click farms generate internet traffic for a site in the following ways:

* Generate fake website traffic
* Increase pay-per-click payouts
* Increase pay-per-impressions
* Increase followers and likes
* Increase comments on a site
* Channeling traffic to fraudulent sites to increase ranking
* Channeling traffic to increase domain authority
* Create backlinks and sharing of articles

Here are example photos of what click farms looks from the site ClickCease:

A group of people sitting at computers

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

A picture containing text, person, music, indoor

Description automatically generated

**Are Click Farms Illegal?**

***Click farms are “not illegal***”**.** Surprisingly, there are no laws against click farms anywhere in the world.

According to [ClickCease](https://www.clickcease.com/blog/list-of-click-fraud-statistics/), financial and legal services were hit with around 25% invalid/fake clicks during 2020. Ninety percent of all pay per click traffic ad campaigns on Google and Bing are affected by click fraud.

**How do you eliminate Click Fraud?**

**There are two ways:**

1. **Advertise with flat rate fee to control advertising costs**
2. **Hire a click fraud security service firm**