

Affiliate Classroom

Volume 4 Number 11
October 2008
AffiliateClassroom.com

The journal of affiliate marketing and management best practices

Topics in PPC

**Amit
Mehta:
From
Frustrated
Newbie to
PPC Super
Affiliate**

**Multiply Your
PPC Dollars
(Without Spending
More)**

**Avoid the
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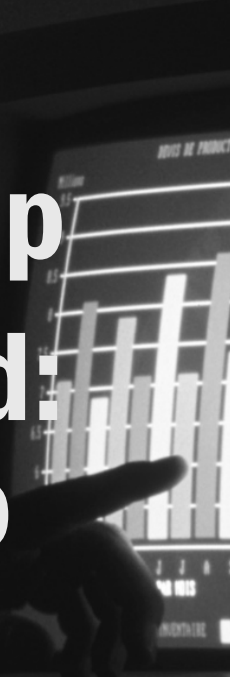


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Affiliate Classroom Magazine is published monthly by Affiliate Classroom, Inc.™ Back issues are available at AffiliateClassroom.com

My Journey from Frustrated Newbie to PPC Super Affiliate

By Amit Mehta, PPCClassroom.com



I knew that even after that dot-com bust, there was a lot of opportunity on the Internet. So I started checking out books from the library and learning everything thing about the “Internet economy” that I could.

A lot of affiliates have this misconception that super affiliates were somehow born super affiliates! I have to tell you, that was NOT the case for me.

I still remember vividly how I started out. I was a newly married graduate student living with my wife in a 300-square-foot, one-bedroom/one-bath apartment. We were scraping by on a graduate student salary of \$1,277 a month after taxes. Don't ask me how you can live on that, because I honestly don't know how we did it.

At that time I had gotten burned out with the whole academic world. I wanted something different out of life, something more.

I knew that even after that dot-com bust, there was a lot of opportunity on the Internet. So I started checking out books from the library and learning everything thing about the “Internet economy” that I could.

As I read more and more, I started getting excited and asking myself: *“How can I have a piece of the pie?”*

Discovering Affiliate Marketing

Around the same time, I was also reading about business and investing. In particular, I read books by Robert Kiyosaki (which I highly recommend), such as *Rich Dad, Poor Dad, Cashflow Quadrant*, and several others.

I first discovered affiliate marketing through Kiyosaki's website richdad.com. It said that all I had to do is put these affiliate links on my website and I could make

up to \$500 a month!

Now at the time, \$500 a month represented a 40% increase in my income. I was super excited, to say the least. Only problem was, I had no idea how to build even a basic website, let alone how to get traffic (forget about targeted traffic) to that website.

After busting my butt for about two months, I finally got an extremely ugly website up and running. Over the next several months, I added more content to my site and tried to SEO-optimize my site.

After five to six months, I had 30 whopping articles (almost all of which were written by me) on the site, and I had affiliate banners placed throughout the site in hopes that people would click on them and make a purchase!

In case you're wondering, my site was develop-residual-income.com (it's not live anymore). Great idea, considering at the time I knew nothing about how to develop even a single cent of residual income!

Anyway, you're probably wondering how many unique visitors a day my site was getting after putting all that work into it? *Two* unique visitors a *week*! I actually wasn't as upset about it as you might have thought. I realized that I had absolutely no idea what I was doing.

Setting the Impossible Goal

At around that time, I was listening to an audio series from Nightingale Conant called "Mentored by a Millionaire" by Steven K. Scott (which I also highly recommend).

One particular technique that Scott talked about was "Shooting for the Moon." The idea behind this success technique is to set an impossible goal. Now, I thought the idea was ridiculous, but what did I have to lose? I had not made a single affiliate sale yet.

So I thought to myself, "What's an impossible goal for me right now?" I decided that \$10,000 a month would be my impossible goal. By this time, I had graduated with a Ph.D.

I thought to myself, "What's an impossible goal for me right now?" I decided that \$10,000 a month would be my impossible goal. Making \$10,000 a month online (more than my job income) was beyond my imagination, especially considering my original goal was \$500 a month!

In December 2005 I made \$10,000 – the impossible goal I had just set four months before. And that changed my life.

I knew this business worked; I just had to figure out how to make my sales and profits strong and consistent.

and gotten a \$90,000-a-year job (that's \$7,500 a month before taxes).

Making \$10,000 a month online (more than my job income) was beyond my imagination, especially considering my original goal was \$500 a month!

After I set this goal, I immediately realized I was beating a dead horse with my develop-residual-income.com website. So I dumped it and started searching for other opportunities online.

Two weeks later, I stumbled upon Googlecash, or the direct-linking method of affiliate marketing through AdWords. You know, where you just write Google ads with your affiliate link in the destination URL — no website needed! As long as your ad spend was less than your affiliate commissions, you made a profit.

A light bulb went off in my head; this totally made sense to me. I was so excited that I couldn't sleep for days. I told my wife, *"Honey, this is AWESOME! We're going to be millionaires!"*

And this is how I got started in PPC affiliate marketing.

A Matter of Time, and Effort

Several weeks passed, and I started to realize that this was a little harder than I thought; I had not made a single affiliate sale yet. But I knew the concept would work.

I became involved in some paid forums, and I bought several information products to learn, and apply, as much as I could. I was hungry to learn, and hungry for the information.

As the weeks passed, I started making a few sales here and there, but no real profit yet.

Finally in November 2005, after three months and 15 failed PPC campaigns, I found my first real winner. I made around \$2,000 that month, net profit.

In December 2005 I made \$10,000 — the impossible goal I had just set four months before. And that changed my life.

Yes, I received a nice Christmas bump in December, and my profits fell back to \$3,000 for the following January. At that point, I didn't care. I knew this business worked; I just had to figure out how to make my sales and profits strong and consistent.

Over the next several months, I build my income up to \$20,000 per month and walked away from that \$90,000-a-year job. My last day at that job was June 15, 2006. I'll never forget that day as long as I live, because it was the day I walked into the land of the living!

Life has just gotten better and better every year since.

The Lesson Learned

Last year I made a staggering \$2.4 million in affiliate revenues, and honestly, I am just getting started!

Whatever struggles or obstacles you may be facing in building your affiliate business right now, keep pushing. ***You will overcome them if you stay persistent.*** Trust me, it's worth everything you're doing now.

The rewards of this business are worth every late night, every failed campaign, and every obstacle you may face.

About the Author

Amit Mehta is a Super Affiliate, Speaker, Author, and Blogger. He is currently the lead instructor and coach at PPCClassroom.com.

Amit spent his life studying Physics (not a single course in marketing). While in graduate school, where he earned only \$1,600/month, he looked into affiliate marketing.

\$20,000 in debt and in a job he hated, Amit started building up his part-time affiliate marketing venture. Today, with just a few hours a day, he makes over \$2.4 million a year using just PPC and affiliate marketing.

**Whatever
struggles or
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your affiliate
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Multiply Your PPC Dollars

Expand Your Marketing While Maximizing Your PPC ROI

By David Long

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Done the wrong way, PPC can chew up all your available budget in a day. Done right, you really can profit, and profit big over the long haul, from PPC advertising.

Affiliate marketers often hear of how much money a competitor is making from PPC. Despite having a limited budget, that information (rumor?) makes them itch to get in the game to rake off some of the cash lying on the table.

But there are many ways to use PPC. Done the wrong way, PPC can chew up all your available budget in a day. Done right, you really can profit, and profit big over the long haul, from PPC advertising.

The basic method consists of multiplying your PPC dollars by forging relationships. The ultimate reward is to maximize your ROI.

What Is PPC?

PPC (Pay Per Click) is familiar to everyone now, even when they don't know the name. It is nothing more than those small text ads on the right you see on Google or Yahoo when you search for something online. The hope (validated everyday) is that someone will click on an ad rather than, or along with, one of the organic results.

As most know by now, too, those ads are not free. Advertisers (often, affiliate marketers) pay to put them there, just as they would pay for a classified ad in a newspaper. (Remember those?)

The sad fact is, though, that unlike a newspaper, you can pay, but you are not guaranteed placement. Ads can slip off to a later page or off the search site entirely.

Several factors influence that, first and foremost of which is the number of clicks the ad gets within what time interval. "How many" and "what time interval" are, ultimately, determined by the gods of Google and Yahoo, unless you can fork over enough cash to guarantee it stays there.

Google tends to reward advertisers who send visitors to landing pages on quality sites that provide users with more than a sales pitch.

But, unless you are Bill Gates, you have only a limited budget and have to endure the risk of your ad disappearing. So, it pays to maximize your ROI by optimizing the odds of your ad resulting in a sale. Paradoxically, one of the best ways to do that is **not** to aim at a sale at all. Instead, aim at generating a relationship.

Here's why, and how.

Aim at Creating Relationships, Not One-Time Buyers

A person who clicks on your ad is, almost by definition, a good prospect. They are looking for something they think you are selling, as evidenced by your ad. Suppose they do click and you hit them right away with sales copy and a picture of the item with its price prominently displayed. Great. You have made the product they seek easy to buy and they can make an immediate buying decision.

Now, what happens if you don't have exactly what they are looking for at the price you're offering? They look elsewhere. You have just blown your one chance to make that sale. The money you paid to place that ad is wasted.

"So, what?" you say. "That's the nature of PPC. It's a numbers game. There will be another along soon." But in some markets, you can do more than just pay for the click and let those non-buying visitors leave.

Instead, you can shift your model and improve your numbers. Present them not only with information on the product and an offer to buy, but value-add content that will keep them around longer. Offer them a chance to become a regular visitor.

Value-add content has yet another powerful benefit: it can improve your Google Quality Score, resulting in lower click costs over time. Google tends to reward advertisers who send visitors to landing pages on quality sites that provide users with more than a sales pitch.

So your visitors aren't the only ones who benefit from informative content. You can reap the rewards in a much lower CPC (cost per click) than your competitors are paying.

Product Reviews

Redesign your landing page to give them valuable content. One great way is through great product reviews.

When you shop for an HDTV, you want to know all about the product, not just its price next to a photo. You want to know the screen size, the resolution, and much more that will help you decide if that price is too much or just right. You want a comparison between that product and those of its competitors. Well-written product reviews provide visitors with that crucial information.

The same ideas apply no matter what product is on sale. Concentrate less on making a sales pitch right away and more on providing valuable information. People will be more likely to return to your site for that product and others in the same category.

Testimonials

Believable testimonials offer another way to provide great content for visitors who arrive from a PPC ad click. They're expecting to be hit with a blatant sales pitch and instead you lay it in more subtly. Offer them trustworthy opinions on the product or service.

Observe how Amazon gets people to buy. Sure they have great prices. But they also pioneered the interactive method of allowing real people to leave comments on the product. That makes the testimonials believable.

Testimonials from recognized experts are one more way to make quotes touting a product valuable. People trust their friends first, followed by the views of known experts. If Warren Buffet plugs a book by Jack Welch, you've got a double whammy. Both are known and respected business experts.

If you are selling an ebook, for example, both these methods work well. Unless you are a recognized author with a track record, you need others to brag about the benefits of your book. When lots of ordinary people say they bought it and are happy they did, you are one leg up on the competition. If a "big name" does so, you're two

Redesign your landing page to give them valuable content. One great way is through great product reviews.

People will be more likely to return to your site for that product and others in the same category.

The more regular subscribers you have, the more chances you have to put your pitch in front of them. A PPC ad click represents one chance to make a sale. A newsletter offers many.

steps ahead.

Look at Rosalind Gardner's superaffiliatehandbook.com as one example of a landing page that converts well. You'll find lots of great sales letter content, a big chunk of which is testimonials from satisfied customers and "stars" in the affiliate marketing industry.

Get Opt-In Subscribers

Opt-in is a stellar way to profit from the majority of PPC ad clicks. Many people who click a PPC ad are just like you. They are not buying, per se; they are shopping.

Shopping involves getting information about the product or service. Getting them to opt in to your newsletter allows them to get the information they seek. In return, you benefit in several ways.

The more regular subscribers you have, the more chances you have to put your pitch in front of them. A PPC ad click represents one chance to make a sale. A newsletter offers many.

Your newsletter gives you another long-term advantage: the chance to build a reputation as an expert. You can be viewed as the "go-to" gal or guy on anything related to the product or service you advertise.

Whether it is the latest digital camera, intricate crochet patterns, or affiliate marketing tips and tricks, a newsletter gives you a forum in which to show your stuff.

Also, there's no doubt that getting a visitor to opt-in on a first visit is a lot easier than getting them to plop down cash the first time around. Most visitors want to get to know you a little bit before they trust you enough to buy. Sending them newsletters will quickly give them plenty of reason to regard you as a valued source of information about the things they will eventually buy.

Get a subscriber from your PPC ad, and you have just used your PPC dollar to cover not only one product, but a potentially unlimited number. You have turned a one-time chance into a long-term relationship.

One Product vs. Many: The Click Multiplier

The way many affiliate marketers use it, a PPC ad provides a searcher with a way to purchase at most one product. But, by establishing an ongoing relationship, you have many more opportunities to sell not just one product or service, but many.

Through any of the methods described above, you can splash visitors with content about a single product. Or, you can offer them a page that offers several. But beware of customer expectations. If your ad touts one product but the landing page displays dozens, a visitor can feel betrayed.

If, instead, you advertise **information** about the product and provide **more** than the visitor asked for, you will have a grateful visitor. Few people get annoyed by the info on extra products listed at the bottom of an Amazon search. Looking for a Panasonic DVD? You get that, but you also get info on Samsung, Sony, and more.

Keep that multiple-product pitch in the form of valuable content and not hard-sell tactics, and you'll have happy visitors who will come back time and time again.

That multiplies the value of a single PPC click to however many products you offer. Now, instead of one-click, one-product (a budget buster for most of us, unless your conversion rate is through the roof), you can have one-click, 10-products. The odds of pumping up your ratio of sales revenue to PPC ad dollars spent just rose by 10. The effect on your ROI will be obvious.

Summary

PPC offers a way to target searchers. It narrows the field down for you, by selecting a subset of all searchers — those who are interested in what you offer. They are predisposed to buy your product. But most are not ready to buy based on that single click. By offering them information and establishing a long-term relationship, you turn a possible one-time buyer into a probable ongoing customer.

Following these ideas will result in more sales over the long run, and not very long at that. At the same time, you will stretch and multiply your PPC budget dollars. That's something we could all be happy about.

About the Author

David Long is a freelance writer and editor with over 20 years of experience. His PLR articles and eBooks have appeared on hundreds of websites. They cover topics that include Wine & Beer, Travel, Gardening, Health & Fitness, Pets, Stocks & Bonds, and dozens more subjects. He can be contacted for hire at JDavidLong@gmail.com

Avoid the Google Slap

Giving Google What It Wants

By Mark Thompson

<http://www.income-academy.com>



All of Google's policies share one overriding principle: to make a user's experience a positive and safe one.

Giving Google what they want is not always an easy task. With constant updates to algorithms and terms and conditions, it is not unusual for a pay-per-click campaign that was perfectly acceptable one day to be "Google Slapped" the next. The best thing you can do is to stick within the most current guidelines and update your site or ads if they change.

A "Google Slap" is when Google increases the cost of your PPC campaign to \$5 or \$10 from its original cost of a few cents or a dollar or two. Google does this to campaigns that they regard as not being of sufficiently high quality.

Each and every AdWords campaign has a quality score, and as Google changes their rules or algorithms, these scores can also change. Later, we'll look at what you can do to avoid a slap or to recover from one. But first let's try to work out exactly what Google wants.

Following the Google Rules: Ad Content

As you can probably imagine, Google wants you to adhere to lots of rules. To make it easier for advertisers, Google breaks these into three distinct areas: Editorial/Format, Content, and Links. All these policies share one overriding principle: to make a user's experience a positive and safe one. Let's look a little closer at these three main areas.

Editorial and Format Rules

The editorial and format rules cover everything from spelling, grammar, and punctuation, to trademarks, and to pretty much everything in between. Google is very particular about what you can and can't say in an ad. The use of superlatives is out, as are trademarks and

unacceptable phrases. However, most of the breaches of the editorial and format rules will be highlighted before your PPC ads go live.

Some of the areas that don't get picked up immediately are claims that may be made in the ads and applied affiliations. Once again, it is important to make sure that your ads are honest and that you give Google no cause to halt your campaigns.

Content Rules

Google's content policies for AdWords ads are quite comprehensive, with a long list of products or items that you can't advertise. Like the editorial and format guidelines, most of these will get picked up before the ads go live; if not then, shortly afterwards when a manual check is done. Generally the rule is, if it's illegal or offensive, then you can't advertise it.

Links Rules

The final area of guidelines laid down by Google deal with links. Google is particular about what passes as an acceptable link from a PPC ad. Google requires two links in each ad, the destination URL and the display URL. The display URL is shorter and must accurately reflect where the destination URL, which the customer doesn't see, leads to.

The following example is what Google likes to see:

Destination URL: <http://www.bigbluewidthets.net/bluewidthets.html>

Display URL: www.BigBlueWidgets.net

It may seem to you that the links guidelines are the shortest; but in fact, they are the most important. The links guidelines also cover what Google regards as acceptable sites to which the PPC ads can send visitors.

Following the Google Rules: Landing Pages

Earlier, I talked about Google Slaps, and it is the final part of the links guidelines that deals with the all-important "Landing Page and Site Quality Guidelines."

Google's content policies for AdWords ads are quite comprehensive, with a long list of products or items that you can't advertise.

Generally the rule is, if it's illegal or offensive, then you can't advertise it.

**When all is
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Give them
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long as you
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Google Slap.**

In fact, the entire area of Google Slaps is summed up in one small paragraph tucked away in the “Landing Page and Site Quality Guidelines”:

*Furthermore, following our site guidelines will help improve your landing page quality score. As a component of your keywords' overall Quality Scores, **a high landing page quality score can affect your AdWords account in three ways:***

*Decrease your keywords' cost-per-clicks (CPCs)
Increase the position of your keyword-targeted ads on the content network
Improve the chances that your placement-targeted ads will win a position on your targeted placements*

I've bolded the 14 words that are most important. The amount of consternation, lost income, and sleepless nights that these 14 words have caused is immeasurable. To sum up what Google is saying: if you don't have a good-quality landing page, you aren't going to be able to run a profitable AdWords campaign.

When all is said and done, it all boils down to Google wanting **good-quality ads** and **good-quality landing pages**. Give them that, and you should be able to run your campaigns as long as you want without fear of the dreaded Google Slap.

We've seen above that good quality ads are dependent on sticking to Google's rules, which are clearly laid out in the guidelines. Providing good-quality landing pages is also dependent on Google's rules, but the rules in this case are open to wider interpretation so let's look at exactly what Google wants.

Google wants landing pages to be three things. They want the pages to be relevant and have original content. They want the pages to be transparent so that the visitor knows who they are dealing with.

Finally, they want the pages to be navigable. By providing all three, you can ensure that your site meets Google's quality guidelines.

Relevant and Original Content

Google wants your site to be relevant to the ad that is being displayed. If your ad promises details on one type of product, make sure it provides that information and not information on another product. If you have several pages on your site and your ad mentions one particular product, link to that page; don't link to a general page that list several products. Users should be able to find what your ad promises quickly.

Your site should have original content not available anywhere else. Interestingly Google says that if your ad links to a catalog page or a page with general search results, you should add additional "substantial" unique content. The originality aspect also means that affiliates should not copy content from the advertiser's site, and that the page should not mirror the look and feel of the original.

Transparency

Google is very keen on advertisers building trust with their customers. This means that they expect you to be open with the customers. You should inform your visitors of the nature of your business, you should ensure that you deliver what you promised in your ad, and your site should not mess with their computer settings.

The easiest way to stick to these guidelines is to have a number of additional pages that list your business details, your privacy policy, and your terms and conditions. Of course you must also ensure the customer has a smooth transaction and gets what they paid for. Additionally, any ads on the page should be readily identifiable.

Google's guidelines also suggest that you should not request information from your visitor if it's not necessary; therefore, they expect the user to have access without registering. This obviously also covers squeeze pages, so pay particular attention to your quality score if you use a short squeeze page.

Google is very keen on advertisers building trust with their customers. This means that they expect you to be open with the customers.

The easiest way is to have a number of additional pages that list your business details, your privacy policy, and your terms and conditions.

Ensure your page loads quickly and provide as short a path as possible to the offers. Avoid distractions, popups, and flash elements.

Navigability

Google expects the page to be easily navigable. This is actually as much for your benefit as for that of the visitors. As Google says, turning visitors into customers is much easier if they can find what they are looking for!

The key to complying with Google guidelines here is to make sure that the customers can find what they are looking for with no distractions. This is really a matter of common sense. Ensure your page loads quickly and provide as short a path as possible to the offers. Finally, avoid distractions, popups, and flash elements.

Rules Are Good for Everyone

Keeping with the guidelines Google has laid down is to benefit not only your potential customers, but your business, as well. You'll find if you keep within Google's guidelines, your campaigns will cost less, the ads will be listed higher in the rankings, and you'll get more customers. Overall, that's not a bad trade-off.

About the Author

Mark Thompson spent many years working in an IT consultancy in London. Following a re-evaluation of his goals and lifestyle in 2004, he sold everything he couldn't fit into the family car and moved to rural Spain, where he now pursues a variety of online ventures. Visit his website <http://www.income-academy.com> to learn more about the benefits of his low-cost online business coaching.

What to Do About Click Fraud

By Kathy Jackson
jacksokathy@gmail.com



Pay-per-click marketers don't think that click fraud will undermine the entire pay-per-click market. But click fraud does occur, and it does diminish the success rate of many campaigns.

What Is Click Fraud?

A formal definition of click fraud is, "the act of clicking on a search engine sponsored listing or banner ad with the intention of increasing clicks that deplete the advertiser's pay-per-click budget."

A more succinct definition is this: Click fraud is theft, pure and simple!

Pay-per-click marketers and the industry in general don't think that click fraud will undermine the entire pay-per-click market. But click fraud does occur, and it does diminish the success rate of many online marketing campaigns.

Click fraud is an industry-wide problem. It's not just large merchants, or small merchants, or affiliate marketers who are being affected by the click fraud problem. Click fraud is an equal opportunity problem that is affecting the entire PPC advertising venue.

Why Does Click Fraud Happen?

As Internet marketers we all do our best to make friends and influence people. Along the way, however, we inevitably make enemies. In business, there are always winners and losers. Sometimes those who lose and are less than happy with us will instigate a click fraud attack simply for the purpose of "getting even."

Our competitors sometimes have a severe "green-eyed monster" attack and will launch a click-fraud campaign out of nothing more than jealousy. What better way to narrow the gap than to increase the advertising costs of a competitor? Click fraud is a method used by jealous competitors to reduce the balance of his competitor's bank

account without having to rob the bank — but it is still theft, and it is still illegal.

Sometimes affiliates are paid a commission for each click generated on a merchant's advertisement on the affiliate's own website. There are some greedy affiliate marketers who instigate fraudulent clicks on the merchant's PPC advertisements in order to increase their own income.

Anger, jealousy, and money are all very good motives for click fraud.

How Does Click Fraud Happen?

Of course, some of those who engage in click fraud simply manually click on their competitor's pay-per-click advertisements themselves repeatedly. They know that each time they click, their competitor is being charged and is thus losing money by being required to pay for useless clicks.

But it's pretty simple to identify many clicks from the same IP address. There are always "fingerprints," so to speak, left with each click on a PPC advertisement. Fraudulent clickers have been caught and prosecuted.

Sometimes foreign workers are hired to instigate fraudulent clicks either on a competitor's PPC advertisement or on advertisements from which an affiliate is earning an income.

Fraudulent clickers have gone high tech, too. The more sophisticated unethical marketers have developed techniques that are designed to outwit honest and unsuspecting PPC advertisers by depleting their budgets and/or daily allocations, or by reducing return on investment in an attempt to take the top position for sponsored links.

Both cloaking and spider technologies are out there, and they are being used to instigate fraudulent clicks on PPC advertisements.

The more sophisticated unethical marketers have developed techniques that are designed to outwit honest and unsuspecting PPC advertisers by depleting their budgets and/or daily allocations, or by reducing return on investment in an attempt to take the top position for sponsored links.

A click fraud perpetrator might access the Internet using a single IP address, or block of IP addresses, while fraudulently clicking on your ads. They can cloak or disguise their IP address so it appears that your PPC ads are being accessed from many different IP addresses.

A click fraud perpetrator might access the Internet using a single IP address, or block of IP addresses, while fraudulently clicking on your ads. They can cloak or disguise their IP address (like a spammer using a fake "reply to" address) so it appears that your PPC ads are being accessed from many different IP addresses.

Another click fraud program that's very popular among these crooks is one that uses spider technology. Spiders (released by fraudulent clickers) crawl the Internet looking for competitor's pay-per-click ads, and then automatically generate bogus clicks on the sponsored link.

Identifying Click Fraud

There's one sure way to identify fraudulent clicks. Monitoring your site visitors from pay-per-click marketing and establishing baseline visitor behavior, unusual patterns will become apparent immediately.

Conversion rates: If you know what your usual conversion rates are (how many clicks it takes to get a conversion), you'll be able to identify deviations. Deviations indicate click fraud.

Clicks by country: A sudden explosion in clicks from a foreign country may indicate that you're the victim of click fraud.

Repeated visits from the same IP address: This isn't always an indication of click fraud, but when the information is combined with other statistics, you could see a pattern that indicated click fraud.

Page depth: An overly frequent visitor who never looks at any page other than your home page could also be a good indication of click fraud.

Time on site: Return visitors spend more time on a website. If the time spent on your site is too short to be humanly generated, that's also a good tip off of click fraud.

Acceptance of cookies: This is another stat that can tell you a lot. Some bots use browser-less technology to crawl the web, so they don't accept cookies. About 95% of your visitors will accept cookies. Less than that indicates click fraud.

Clicks at odd hours: The Internet is always open for business, of course, but an unusual number of clicks at odd hours will likely indicate that those clicks are coming from time zones on the other side of the world and could be an indication of click fraud.

Reporting Click Fraud

Fraudulent clicks hurt everybody. They hurt the marketers and advertisers who pay for PPC advertising first, but they also hurt the customer. Advertising costs are always passed on to the consumer, so fraudulent clicks can result in higher prices. Furthermore, if search results are skewed, customers will find it much more difficult to find what they are looking for. The search engines can also be hurt.

It is in the best interest of search engines to alleviate the fraudulent click problem. You might think, "The search engines are getting paid for real AND fraudulent clicks, so why should they care?" They do care.

If click fraud reduces the relevance of the search results provided by the search engines, or results in advertising costs that marketers can't afford, ad revenues for the search engines will decrease. Search engines are the ones who will suffer the most from click fraud, so it really is in their best interest to eliminate fraudulent clicks on PPC advertisements.

Most of the respected search engines acknowledge the click fraud problem and are actively reviewing suspicious activity. When click fraud is uncovered, the more respected networks are automatically making refunds to PPC advertisers.

Of course, ultimately it is up to you to discover click fraud that's being perpetrated against you, and it's up to you to report this illegal activity to the search engines. It's also up to you to be persistent enough to get any

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If you think that you have been a victim of click fraud, remember that your advertising dollars are at stake.

refund that is due you.

Here's what you do:

1. **Gather your information from your statistics as outlined above.**
2. **Write a paragraph of two outlining the reasons why you believe fraudulent clicks have occurred based upon the statistics from step 1.**
3. **Use the statistics and the paragraphs that you have written to present the information to compose an email to send to the search engine where the click fraud occurred. (Make sure that you include all pertinent data and that your explanation is clear, concise and complete.)**

Next, you wait. A day or so may go by, but then you will probably get an email from the search engine.

If the search engine is one of the larger and more respected ones, they will probably tell you that they have instigated an active investigation into the matter and in a few days (or weeks) they will issue a credit for the fraudulent clicks that you were charged for.

However, not all search engines are large or respected. These smaller search engines are usually much less responsive to a fraudulent click problem. It's likely that you'll be told that the search engine doesn't see a problem and that there will be no refund forthcoming.

Don't take "no" for an answer if you know that you've been a victim of click fraud. Be persistent. Ask for clarification. Demand answers.

If you think that you have been a victim of click fraud, remember that your advertising dollars are at stake.

Be patient but be very persistent, and stay with the problem until you get the refund that is due you.

Click Fraud Technology

Several different vendors have come out with click fraud detection software programs. Some of these sophisticated statistical models can analyze your site activity and actually "predict" potential click fraud behavior. Your first line of defense is always your own diligence, but this technology can help identify click fraud that could go undetected by the human eye.

Professional services are also available to monitor your PPC campaigns and act as a kind of "early warning system" of potential click fraud as it happens.

Conclusion

Click fraud hurts everyone associated with the industry — merchants, advertisers, customers, and even the pay-per-click search engines themselves. Because it affects all of us, we all need to actively work toward eliminating the click fraud problem.

About the Author

Kathy Jackson is a Texas rancher and a contributing author for several farm and ranch publications. She is also an experienced freelance writer of email newsletters, review copy, educational materials, and blog posts on a wide variety of topics, including many aspects of online business and affiliate marketing. Internet marketing is one of Kathy's burning interests. You can read some of Kathy's articles on the Affiliate Classroom Blog at <http://blog.affiliateclassroom.com/>. She can be contacted via email at jacksokathy@gmail.com.

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