Everything you need to know about click fraud

Posted by [Toby Nwazor](#) / 23 - Oct - 2017

The evolution of technology provides many benefits for internet users but can also cause negative effects and damages to business owners who use online platforms for advertising and produce money when visitors click on certain ads. The more clicks the more money. Inevitably, [click fraud](#) or pay-per-click fraud appeared, which obviously represents an illegal practice that brings major consequences for the authors, if they are caught. Not only they are banned from a publisher network, but also they can be arrested because in certain jurisdictions click fraud is a felony. When a problem appears, the solutions come rapidly. Starting from this statement, many precautions and measures have been taken by advertising networks, such as monitoring clicks and use the data to detect and eliminate fraudulent clicks.

click fraud

How click fraud works

Click fraud affects businesses that rely on pay-per-click advertising because it involves the inflation of traffic statistics. This means that click fraud authors make use of automated clicking programs in order to trick the business owners into thinking that a specific number of visitors click on the advertisements, generally a larger number than expected when in fact, those clicks will never help them make profit. This is how the click fraud works. The perpetrators agree to display advertisements on affiliate programs like Google with the purpose to receive a part of their pay-per-click fees, which are paid by the advertiser. However, this is only a façade because their real intentions are different. They do not place the ads on legitimate websites with real traffic but on "fake" websites that were created from the first place with the goal of placing ads. Next, automated processes or more
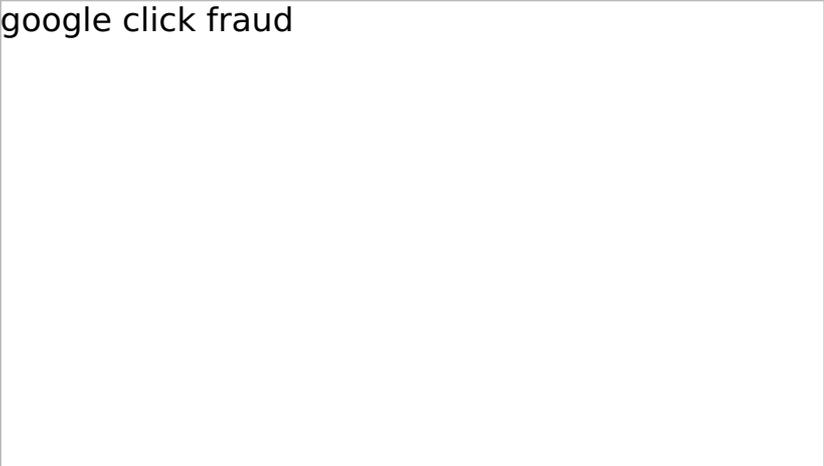
simple, hitbots produce fraudulent clicks fast. The perpetrator uses all these fraudulent clicks to make money by charging the owner of the affiliate website. Thus, [Google click fraud](#) has become a real issue nowadays.

What are the intentions?

The most common reasons for click fraud are personal gain and the desire to eliminate the competition. Thus, publishers resort to this method in order to increase their earnings because the more people click on their website the more profit they make so whether they encourage relatives and friends to click on the advertisements or they become involved in a specific type of click fraud, their goals is more powerful than ethics. Regarding the latter situation, competitors who are driven by the envy or want to make sure that they make the most profit, attack the websites of other businesses on the market. By generating fraudulent clicks, the company targeted pays more than necessary, which eventually exceeds its budget. This depletes their funds and does not allow them to continue running advertisements, which represents a negative impact on the business. Small businesses are more affected by this action because they can barely afford to pay for advertisements from the beginning. Other personal or political reasons could explain the use of click fraud.

How to identify click fraud

google click fraud

As a business owner, you have to consider the possibility of being a victim of click fraud. Therefore, you have to pay constant attention to the funds allocated for advertisements in order to notice any irregularities. For instance, if your enquiries have dropped significantly but your expenses have increased, you should act immediately in order to stop the attack. Moreover, if the conversions lack but you notice more visitors than usual, this definitely represents a warning sign. Simple click fraud methods are not difficult to detect because it is impossible for a single person to click on an advertisement dozens of times just in a second. Thus, no logical explanation is available, which leads us to click fraud. However, when it comes to complex techniques, they raise major detection difficulties.

Types of click fraud

In time, click fraud has become a major problem for advertisers and even though they are vigilant, sometimes the situation can prove to be quite overwhelming. If we take into account the complex techniques used by perpetrators, we can understand

their struggle. In order to protect themselves against click fraud, they have to be familiar with the strategies and the warnings that indicate the possibility of a click fraud.

- Crowdsourcing represents the most common and obvious method used by publishers to increase their revenues and it involves persuading a large number of people, even strangers to click on their advertisements. Even though people are unaware of the consequences of their action and they just try to support the page, the publishers have a well-thought plan or some of them even think that their method is legitimate.
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- Click farms are considered an extreme type of click fraud because people are aware of their actions but they still do it in exchange for money. Practically, they spend each day clicking on advertisements and receive instructions that have the purpose to make their practice â€œnaturalâ€ and trick automated filters. Their only mission is to seem really interested in the site and use different means to prove it, such as subscribing to the companyâ€™s newsletter.
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- Hit inflation attacks are a malicious type of click fraud that practically forces visitors to click by redirecting them to an advertisement. Some of the users do not even notice the ad, but the fact that they have visited the page counts. Compared to the first two types of click fraud, this one does not give people the choice of viewing the content on the page or clicking the ads.
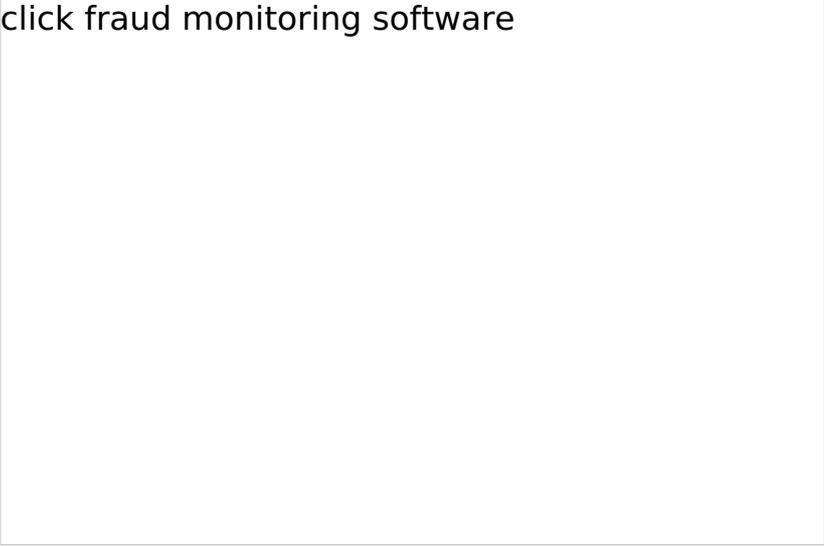 Â
- Bot Networks is a method used by knowledgeable and organized perpetrators because they are able to infect the computers with malware without raising any suspicions to the owner. Thus, they instruct and use the computers to visit sites and click on advertisements. It is difficult to detect this type of click fraud or protect yourself from it if you do not have advanced software like [TEASoftware](#).

Understand the danger of click fraud

The internet includes staggering amount of data that can be useful, pure garbage or incredibly harmful. Furthermore, it enables visitors to enjoy different products and services while allowing entrepreneurs to advertise their business and make profit. We already know that most of business owners use the pay-per-click method to make their presence known on the market. However, they must be aware and understand the [dangers of click fraud](#), which inevitably comes into discussion. Anyone with malicious intentions can use different types of click fraud, from the simplest to the most complex techniques to attack their business and deplete their funds. Obviously, this will make them lose money and impede a smooth evolution. However, by giving attention and becoming familiar with this topic, they can prevent or apply various solutions that could protect them from click fraud.

Find out if your business is vulnerable

click fraud monitoring software

If as a business owner, you have never dealt with fraudulent clicks it does not mean that you do not have to take precautions. As long as you are using pay-per-click advertising, your business remains exposed to all the threats existent on the internet meaning that you should anticipate and act beforehand. On the other hand, you might experience this problem and not even be able to recognize it. Therefore, you have to conduct a research and also discover the difference between invalid clicks and click fraud. When it comes to invalid clicks, you can resort to a company that is able to monitor and inspect visitors thanks to advanced systems. However, click fraud represent a more difficult matter to handle but not impossible. For this reason, it is better to prevent than lament. Find out if your business is vulnerable to fraudulent clicks and make the necessary changes to change your victim status. This will also help you be prepared for the future.

Ways to protect your business from click fraud

Even though Google provides a level of protection for advertisers apparently it is not enough so they find themselves in the situation of resorting to other solutions that will help them regain control, such as [click fraud monitoring software](). This solution enables the detection of invalid traffic and protects them against different types of click fraud, such as bot networks. Immediately after the detection, it automatically blocks it and allows you to recover the money lost by filing a report containing all the details regarding the â€œincidentâ€ including locations and IP addresses of each suspicious click. The right software will provide necessary information about every visitorâ€™s mouse movements and clicks in order to establish a behavioral pattern and use them to increase the probability of buying traffic. On the other side, business owners can also contribute and take matters into their own hands by making several changes that will ensure their safety. For instance, if they are convinced that click fraud comes from a specific region, it could be a good decision to eliminate those locations from your advertisement targeting or if they believe that a competitor acts against them illegally, exclude their city. Because the software can disclose the IP address related to the fraudulent clicks, they have the possibility to impede the respective IP address to receive their advertisement in the future.