

Removal of Google Analytics Referral Spam

A short guide to implementing filters

This guide makes references from: <http://www.ohow.co/stop-www-event-tracking-com-referral-spam/>

Referral spam is an increasing problem in Google Analytics, and Google are working on a solution to combat it. Referral spam is NOT a result of the spammer visiting (or knowing about) your web site.

First, let's take a look at the structure of a typical Google Analytics tracking id. It looks something like this:

UA-2353-2323-23

What these spammers do is create automation software that hits Google Analytics server NON STOP with random numeric values after then UA portion of the above. Because they are hitting millions of variations, it is common that every now and then (which is quite often) a valid **UA** tracking code is hit. This COULD be your site's code, and it is exactly that when you see the fake referrals being tracked. This is also why the events / referrals are so much lower than your traffic. If they truly KNEW your **UA** code, they would hit you non stop, with thousands or hundreds of thousands of referral spam.

While this can not at present be totally avoided, filters can be put in place in order to mitigate further referral spam. These filters however can only be made once you see the referral source in your reports.

How Do I Add Filters?

To add a filter that will prevent FURTHER referral spam for a specified list of domains, follow these steps:

1. Create a new view that will contain your spam filters (never work on the main view). To do this:
 - a. Click on admin
 - b. In the far right below **"View"**, drop down and click **"Create new view"**
 - c. Give that view a name, and select **"website"** as the data to track
 - d. Save the view and ensure it is selected (it should be by default after save)

2. Go to the Admin tab in your Google Analytics account
3. Select the View you want to filter and click on **Filters**
4. Select **New Filter**
5. Choose an appropriate name for the filter, like '**Referrer Spam**'
6. In Filter Type choose **Custom Filter>Exclude Filter > Field: Campaign Source> Filter Pattern:** Enter the domain names you wish to exclude, separated by a pipe symbol, eg: domain1.com|domain2.com|domain.co.uk

You would of course no doubt need to updated this when new ones pop up.

This will only solve the problem of a handful of referrer entries. You will need to add filter rules for all future offending referrals and event spam as well. What I do suggest you do after these steps is the following:

1. **Stop most future spam with these 2 filter rules**
<http://www.ohow.co/what-is-referrer-spam-how-stop-it-guide/>
2. **Hide offending spam events from historical data using Advanced Segments:**
<http://www.ohow.co/remove-referrer-spam-with-segments/>

The guide at <http://www.analyticsedge.com/2014/12/removing-referral-spam-google-analytics/> has a brilliant set of examples to mitigate a lot of Google Analytics spam, and shed some valuable light on the situation.