

Another form of deception is through the design of the page. Some pages are deliberately designed to manipulate users to take an action that will benefit the owner of the website rather than help the user.

Here are some common types of pages with deceptive MC design:

- **Pages that disguise Ads as MC.** Actual MC may be minimal or created to encourage users to click on the Ads. For example, fake search pages ([example](#)) that have a list of links that look like a page of search results. If you click on a few of the links, you will see that the page is just a collection of Ads disguised as search engine results. A “search box” is present, but submitting a new query just gives you a different page of Ads disguised as search results.
- **Pages that disguise Ads as website navigation links.** For example, fake directory pages ([example](#)) that look like a personally curated set of helpful links, possibly with unique descriptions. In reality, the links are Ads or links to other similar pages on the site. Sometimes the descriptions of the links are unrelated to the page.

Take a good look at the page and use your judgment. If you believe the true purpose of the page is not what it appears to be, the page should be rated **Lowest**. If you believe the page was deliberately created with the primary purpose to manipulate users to click on Ads, monetized links, questionable download links, etc., rather than to help people, the page should be rated **Lowest**. If the page uses deception in any form even if not described here, the page should be rated **Lowest**.

#### 4.5.4 Deliberately Obstructed or Obscured MC

Pages are untrustworthy if the MC is deliberately obstructed or obscured due to Ads, SC, interstitial pages, download links or other content that is beneficial to the website owner but not necessarily the website visitor. Attempts to manipulate or coerce users away from the MC is evidence of untrustworthiness.

Here are some examples of pages with deliberately obstructed or obscured MC that should be rated **Lowest**:

- Ads that continue to cover the MC as the website visitor scrolls down the page. The Ads are virtually impossible to close without clicking on the Ad
- Pop-ups that obscure the MC and cannot be closed without taking an action that benefits the website
- An interstitial page that attempts to coerce a download or click that does not benefit the website visitor
- Ads that push the MC down so far that many users would not notice the MC
- MC in white-on-white text or MC presented so that it is difficult for a human being to read

Logins or paywalls on otherwise trustworthy sites should not be considered untrustworthy, deceptive, or coercive. Many high quality sites such as newspapers or magazines cannot exist without monetization through subscriptions and paywalls. Some types of MC should be login protected, such as pages with personal information on online banking websites or private pages on social network websites.

MC may be inaccessible for non-deliberate or non-coercive reasons, such as content that doesn't load or content that is unavailable in a country or region. These are not reasons for **Lowest**.

Use your judgment to assess whether the page is designed to manipulate or coerce users into taking actions that benefit the website. If you are unsure, look at other pages on the same website, conduct reputation research, etc.

**Important:** Remember that many websites need monetization to share content with users. The presence of Ads alone is not enough for **Lowest**.