

This is an opinion piece. So take it as such. To all those who have asked me. This is why I think clickfraud FAR exceeds what is being published by search companies.

1. Bad guys exist.
2. Bad guys who like to break into computers systems exist for profit. Playing Thermo Nuclear War no longer cuts it.
3. Bad guy crackers (ok, thats redundant) will exert how ever much social or technical hacking as is required to grab and sell credit cards and other digital assets. Knowing the return is decent, but the jail risk is more than trivial.
4. The Bad Guys have figured out that the risk of proving they are breaking the law with click fraud is minimal. Try explaining the difference to authorities between a blog, a splog and a website that is trying to make money from any of the many, many affiliate marketing programs that also happens to host adsense or other ad publishing network ads.
5. The Bad Guys have figured out that they look a lot more legit getting checks from google than trying to wash 10k dollars in cash delivered in a bag.
6. The Bad Guys have figured out that untold amounts of dollars are being spent on an ongoing basis by the biggest companies in the world to try to stop them from stealing data that has disputable value and is difficult to sell. Why waste time there when search engine companies, even with the maybe 20 best and brightest assigned to the problem are no match for the legions of hackers around the world who see the easy money and are happy to grab it.
7. The number of splog/fake websites being created EVERY HOUR is exploding. Based on the comments Im getting on my blog from what must be legions of boiler rooms creating marginally understandable comments , with links back to "affiliate websites" and legit email addresses in an effort to legitimize those sites. There must be just as many more in place to sign up those sites for ad publishing networks to act as hosts for fraudulent clicks

Now i have no idea how much money is being lost to click fraud. All i know is that when the black hats see easy money, they take it. I also know that they are greedy and a jealous bunch. The more they see the more they take, so you can pretty well bet that the amount of click fraud is going up by the minute.

And no amount of IP repetition algorithms are going to stop them.

Again, this is all opinion. No investigative reporting going on. Yet.

Maybe my next post on this subject will about **keyword arbitrage** and how its inflating numbers for search engines. Its a simple , somewhat risky, but very workable concept. I buy words on a publishing network on a CPC basis for 10c and I link to a page with outbound links on keywords or affiliate networks that pay more. So if i can buy the keyword "YoBaby" for 50c per click, and have that link to a page full of links that are paying me 5 dollars per click and more than 10pct of my users "click out", Im making money.

It also means the Ad Publisher is getting paid twice for nonsense traffic. Not a bad business for them and the arb. The advertiser paying the 5 dollars per click... Well thats another story.

updated june 2, with respect to hackers who thrive on finding meaning in the morass