

COLUMNS

Preventing fraud in mobile advertising

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Ben Shannon is a mobile marketing strategist at Fiksu DSP

By **Ben Shannon**

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In today's mobile-first world, brands and marketers are becoming increasingly worried about fraud, especially when it comes to mobile ads and analyzing performance metrics.

In fact, 78 percent of brand marketers cite ad and bot fraud as a chief concern.

As mobile becomes the go-to platform to reach consumers, marketers are hyper-focused on reducing their exposure to fraud. And they have good reason. A recent report indicates that brands could lose \$16.4 billion to online ad fraud this year.

Mobile advertisers face various forms of fraud: impression, install and click fraud are all detrimental to performance metrics and a brand's overall credibility.

There are a variety of strategies that brands can implement to avoid these threats.

With the increasing amount of data available, advertisers can shift their techniques and use this data to better target and position their ads, greatly reducing their exposure to ad fraud and, at the same time, increasing advertising effectiveness.

Here are four strategies that brands can implement:

Optimize ads toward high-value events: To counterbalance fraud, advertisers should optimize ads toward high-value events, such as a purchase or newsletter sign up.

Having performance metrics beyond impressions is a dependable way to reduce the risk of fraud.

By creating actions that go beyond the typical bot capabilities, such as clicking through an ad and making a purchase or providing personal information and signing up to learn more, advertisers can get a clearer understanding of who is engaging with their ads and how the ad performed.

Plus, high-value events indicate real user behavior, which provides marketers with key insights and data to use in future campaigns.

Focus on understanding and targeting audiences: As past behavior is the strongest predictor for future behavior, marketers should get in the habit of using this real-world data to more effectively serve mobile ads.

Focusing on user IDs based on actions taken by users can drastically decrease the chances of fraud because they are based on real user behavior, not pre-programmed bots.

Marketers already have access to the unique IDs of users, so creating a database of IDs also gives marketers the opportunity to expand on that audience by building lookalike personas.

These lookalike personas can then allow marketers to target new users based on similar characteristics of current users and serve up ads that are less susceptible to fraud.

Prioritize in-application advertising over mobile Web: In-app advertising provides better viewability as compared to mobile Web, which is still the wild west of the ad fraud world.

Similar to desktop browser ads, mobile Web ads make it more difficult to understand ad inventory and if the ads are actually being viewed.

Apps provide more transparency on where ads will be placed, especially compared to mobile Web.

When you add in programmatic media buying techniques such as lookalike targeting, prioritizing in-app advertising over mobile Web will drastically reduce false impressions, while creating more authentic ads.

Work hand in hand with your DSP: If you are looking to engage in programmatic advertising, partnering with a demand-side platform can help reduce your exposure to fraud.

DSPs work with exchanges to audit traffic across all their clients, giving them the ability to monitor publisher activity closer than a brand can.

For example, DSPs have a blacklist of proven fraudulent media, so they know for what to be on the lookout.

Quality DSPs will also have access to the latest tools and technology for both viewability and fraud prevention, greatly reducing brands' exposure to fraud.

WITH SO MUCH data available to advertisers, understanding how to use that data to better create and deliver ads will play a major role in reducing a brand's exposure to fraud, and increasing a brand's effectiveness at reaching their target audience.

Marketers need to work with their tech partners to minimize fraud and maximize each media dollar.

Quality and consistent fraud prevention means making fraud detection a priority from the outset of a campaign and an ongoing commitment by both the brand and its partners.

Ben Shannon is a mobile marketing strategist at [Fiksu DSP](#), Boston. Reach him at bshannon@fiksu.com.