Click Fraud

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“When a person, automated script, or computer program imitates a legitimate user of a web browser clicking on an ad, for the purpose of generating an improper charge per click”

(Wikipedia Nov. 2006)
Click Fraud Defined

- Types of click fraud
  - Competitor click fraud
    - Deplete competitor’s ad budget
    - Improve relative ad positioning
  - Publisher click fraud
  - Vandalism/pranks

- Related problems
  - “Impression fraud”
  - “Syndication fraud”
  - Failing to honor advertiser-specified limits
Advertiser Perceptions

● Advertisers are losing money
  – Ex: 12% click fraud rate at top search engines; 23% at second-tier search engines (Click Forensics Q3 2006)

● Search engines aren’t trying hard enough to block click fraud
  – Search engines’ & fraudsters’ interests aligned against advertisers

● Advertisers don’t have enough information to detect/combat click fraud

● Search engines are a black box when dealing with complaints
Possible Future Resolutions

- Advertisers bid less
- Advertisers audit more
- Parties change payment metrics
  - CPM or CPA
  - Different definition of “click”
- Status quo