THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
Department of Information Engineering

Seminar

No Please, After You:
Detecting Fraud in Affiliate Marketing Networks

by

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Date	:	**9 December, 2015 (Wednesday)**
Time	:	**11:00am – 12:00noon**
Venue	:	~~**Room 1009, William M.W. Mong Engineering Building**~~
		Room 121, Ho Sin Hang Engineering Building
		The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Abstract

Cookie stuffing is an activity which allows unscrupulous actors online to defraud affiliate marketing programs by causing themselves to receive credit for purchases made by web users, even if the affiliate marketer did not actively perform any marketing for the affiliate program. Using two months of HTTP request logs from a large public university, we present an empirical study of fraud in affiliate marketing programs. First, we develop an efficient, decision-tree based technique for detecting cookie-stuffing in HTTP request logs. Our technique replicates domain-informed human labeling of the same data with 93.3% accuracy.

Second, we find that over one-third of publishers in affiliate marketing programs use fraudulent cookie-stuffing techniques in an attempt to claim credit from online retailers for illicit referrals. However, most realized conversions are credited to honest publishers. Finally, we present a stake holder analysis of affiliate marketing fraud and find that the costs and rewards of affiliate marketing programs are spread across all parties involved.

Biography

Peter Snyder is pursuing a Ph.D. in the Department of Computer Science at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He received his B.A. in political science at Lawrence University, with a focus on economics. His current research focuses on the security and privacy of web browsing. His current projects include measuring the popularity, desirability and security costs of browser complexity, and investigating alternative web systems that prioritize client security and code predictability at minimal cost to web-author expressivity.

** ALL ARE WELCOME **