



CAN THESE NUMBERS BE TRUE?

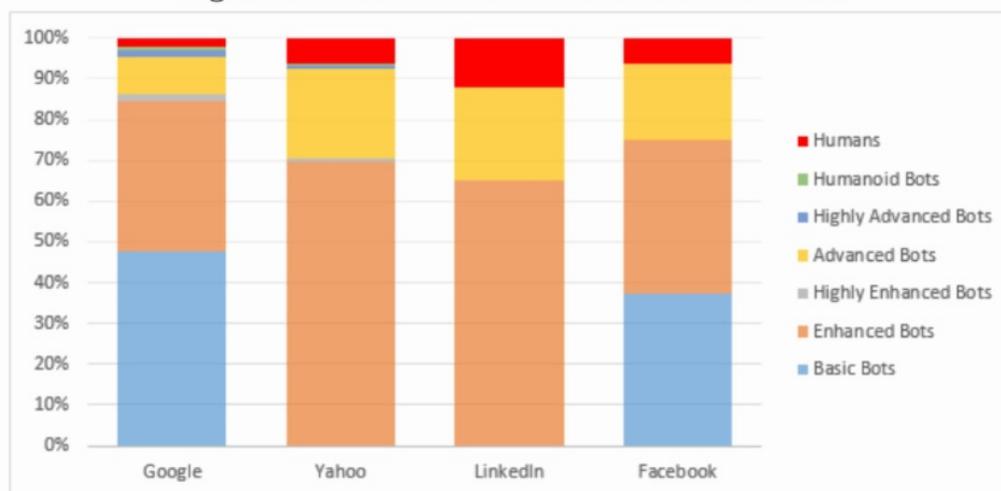
Among the many issues I have with online advertising one of the biggest is this - nobody knows what's true.

Web publishers and online ad sales people have such a horrible record of reliability, web metrics (or as I like to call them, metricks) and data are so famous for being either fake or inaccurate, that it's impossible to know who and what to believe.

But this isn't about them. This is about the people trying to expose them. Earlier this week I was pointed in the direction of a study by a company called OxfordBiochronometrics. They are a company formed at Oxford University that is in the business of validating the online behavior of humans.

I looked at [a study they had conducted](#). They bought ad space on four of the biggest online sites –Google, Facebook, Yahoo and LinkedIn. Then they studied the clicks they got. Their astounding conclusion was that between 88 and 98% of the clicks were fraudulent. Here's a chart

Figure 1: Ratio of Ad-Bot Clicks to Human Clicks



For years I have been calling bullshit on the numbers that web hustlers have been concocting. And I am not easily surprised by fraud on the web. But this is beyond anything I had ever imagined.

But I am not at all convinced that these anti-fraud crusaders aren't tricksters themselves. First, the name OxfordBiochronometrics sounds like a company owned by Dr. Evil. Second, when I go to their website, my browser tells me it's untrustworthy. Third, the study is over a year old. If it's reputable, why hasn't such a sensational finding gotten wider notoriety?

But then I search further and find them quoted and referenced by usually reliable authorities like NBC News, The Wall Street Journal, and Forbes. So am I being scammed or not?

As is always the case with online advertising, you're never quite sure what's real and what ain't.

Two Studies About Ad Blocking...

...were released this week. The first one reported that ad blocking on smart phones grew 90% this year. Read about it [here](#).

The second reported that only about 40% of people know that ad blockers exist, but 80% of the people who know about them use them. Read about it [here](#).

The New York Times

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

Rise of Ad-Blocking Software Threatens Online Revenue

On The Air

The Marketing Book Podcast features my book "[*Marketers Are From Mars, Consumers Are From New Jersey*](#)" this week. I talk with host Douglas Burdett about it [here](#).

Also the second episode of "[*The Ad Contrarian Show*](#)" podcast is now live [here](#). Sharon and I talk about the ANA's frightening investigation of ad industry media practices.



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