

THE MONSTERS OF PAID SEARCH

Beware these Traffic-Devouring Terrors!



BRANDVERITY



DO YOU BELIEVE IN MONSTERS? YOU SHOULD.

Every day, they are taking [thousands of clicks away](#) from your brand. Prowling around your branded keywords and looting your traffic, these [trademark bidders](#) come in all shapes and sizes. From the seemingly innocuous, to the downright scary, they are...

The Monsters of Paid Search

ONLY YOU CAN SAVE YOUR BRAND FROM THESE MONSTERS

How do you know you're under attack by one of these demons? How do you stop them?

As a digital marketer (and especially if you manage paid search), you're the only line of defense against these monsters. You need to protect your brand traffic, make sure that customers' clicks are taking them to where they want to go, and ensure a smooth buyer journey. We'll show you how to become a paid search monster slayer.

Where Monsters Creep

These monsters target your branded keywords, placing ads that divert your most valuable traffic and steal your revenue. This is called [trademark bidding](#). And these monsters are **trademark bidders**.

Why Monsters Attack

Simply put, trademark bidders go after your branded keywords because it's profitable and they get away with it. If you aren't paying attention, they'll keep robbing you blind.

How Monsters Escape

If these monsters are so abundant, why haven't you seen one yet? Well, [they are good at hiding](#). They lurk in the dark corners of the internet and use tactics like day-parting and geo-targeting to evade unsuspecting marketers like you.

These monsters are easy to spot since they are two-faced. On the one hand, good partners who stick to the agreements you've made are a valuable extension to your marketing efforts. On the other hand, there are partners who refuse to play by the rules and take advantage of brands.

Tommy Two-Face

the Channel/Marketing Partner

HUNTING GROUNDS

Online Retail, Clothing & Apparel, Consumer Electronics, Internet & Telecom, Insurance, Travel

EQUIPMENT

The Shield of Plausible Deniability

Partners who do not abide by their partner agreements can always claim the misstep was unintentional.

ATTACKS

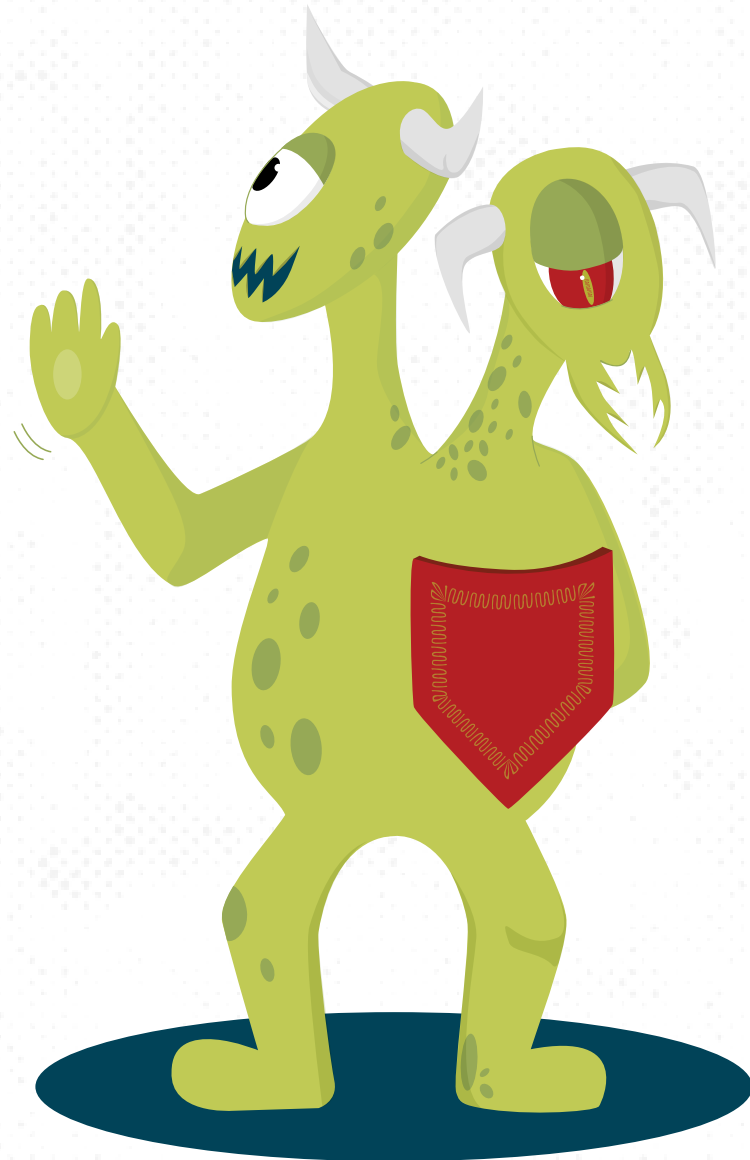
Double Deal

Partners use their distinct biology to their advantage. They can play "good cop, bad cop" with the majority of their transactions being beneficial to your brand, while using other actions to enrich themselves and harm your brand.

Turn a Blind Eye

Similarly, since partners don't have an economic interest in being totally forthcoming, they are adept at turning a blind eye to their own nefarious activities. Emphasizing only their good side, they trick many unwary marketers.

Channel/Marketing Partners sell products and services on behalf of brands. While they can vary widely, some examples include resellers, wholesalers, authorized dealers, and online travel agencies (OTAs).



Tracking Link Affiliates are sneaky and sly creatures. They are rewarded for the traffic they send to brands' websites regardless of how they do it. Typically, their rewards are tied to conversions. When the traffic they refer results in a transaction on the brand's website, the Affiliate receives a percentage of the revenue. This is great if they provided incremental traffic. It's monstrous when they steal traffic that you would have gotten anyways.



Slippery Skip

the Tracking Link Affiliate

HUNTING GROUNDS

Online Retail, Consumer Finance, Travel, Software

EQUIPMENT

The Cloak of Invisibility

Using loopholes in search engine rules and clever tactics, affiliates hide in plain sight while stealing commissions from brands. They knock brands' ads off the Search Engine Results Page (SERP), replacing them with their own, and avoid detection through geo-targeting and day-parting.

ATTACKS

Hijack

The affiliate steals commissions by pretending to be the brand, replacing the brand's own ad on the SERP.

Wheel & Deal

Sometimes coupon and deal sites offer fake bargains in their ad copy. By showing customers a deal they can't refuse, they lure clicks, grab unearned commissions, and confuse your customers.

Competitors are often the most prevalent and easy to find, since they aren't trying to hide. You are in direct competition with them each day for the same set of customers, so they may try to steal your customers away. For example, Adidas may choose to place an ad on a search for "Nike" and vice versa.

Haughty Holga the Competitor

HUNTING GROUNDS

All Across the Internet

EQUIPMENT

The Grey Hat of Tenacity

These monsters are very strong and they don't give up easily. You are in battle with them every day. Competitors are also constantly evolving and watching your every step to see if they should attack or remain in a defensive posture.

ATTACKS

Smash & Grab

Direct competitors often try to entice your customers with last minute offers or even special comparison pages that skew the story in their favor. These ads create significant friction for customers who were about to convert on your website. In other cases, your competitors may even use your brand name in their ad copy.

Regenerate

While one set of competitors may fade away, a new crop will emerge, even if you are the market leader.



The modus operandi of Lead Generators is to collect information from prospective customers and sell that information to brands. Typically, they incentivize visitors to fill out forms by offering free quotes, comparisons, or offers on anything from insurance policies to online education programs to pest inspections.



Loudmouth Luke

the Lead Generator

HUNTING GROUNDS

Insurance, Consumer Finance, Education, Home Services

EQUIPMENT

The Tie of False Promise

These monsters are slick and it's easy for searchers to be duped. The promise: Just fill out the form and you'll get what you need. But in fact, the form is just a way to collect information to sell to the highest bidder, usually the brand that would have gotten the click and the business in the first place. Worse yet, sometimes these leads are sold to competitors.

ATTACKS

Mercenary

Lead generators freely poach leads and then sell them back to the brand owner at an inflated cost, and even worse, they sell them to the brand's direct competitors.

Data Breach

Consumers think they are filling out forms to get the information they need. Little do they know, those personal details are being sold to the highest bidder—and may get your brand into [regulatory trouble](#).

Search Arbitragers use ads to lead consumers to an additional set of ads (i.e. farther away from their intended destination). The assumption that Search Arbitragers make is that the ad clicks on their landing page will create enough revenue to outweigh the cost of placing the original ad.

Swindling Sabrina the Search Arbitrager

HUNTING GROUNDS

All Across the Internet

EQUIPMENT

The Harp of CPC Inflation

With these monsters hard at work bidding on your branded terms, competition for these terms goes up, driving up the CPC.

ATTACKS

Siren Song

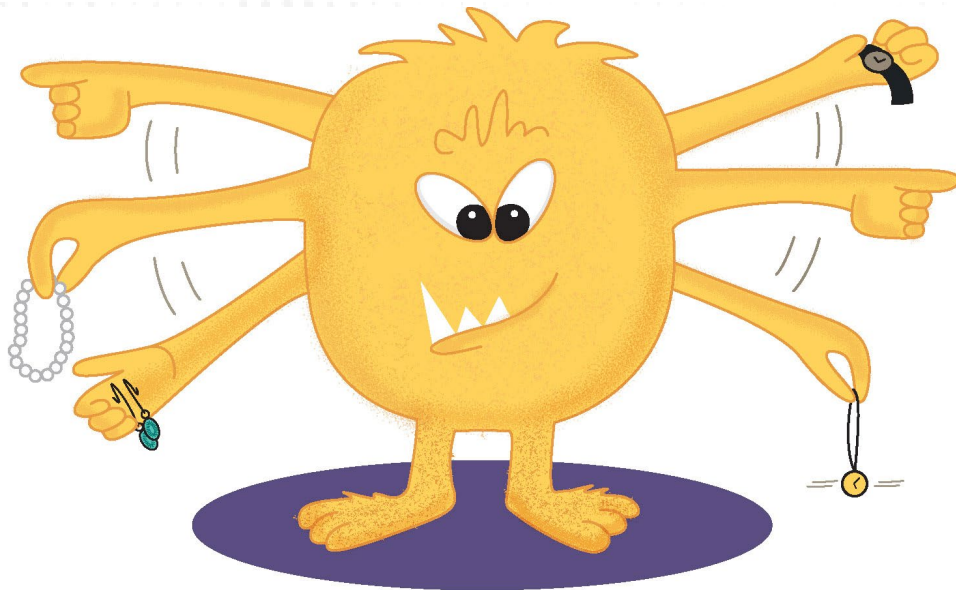
These monsters use search-related terminology in their copy, such as “Looking for [brand term]? Search faster here.” to lure away traffic.

Riptide

Once they’ve pulled searchers to their landing page, Search Arbitragers overwhelm them with more ads, stranding them far away from your site.



The Comparison Shopping Engine monster is known for his many arms, which allow him to do a lot of shady activities, all at the same time. These monsters typically offer pricing comparisons of various products. Unlike Affiliates who are only paid for conversions, CSEs are usually paid per click.



Frankie Fast-Fingers

the Comparison Shopping Engine (CSE)

HUNTING GROUNDS

Online Retail

EQUIPMENT

The Shiny Objects of Confusion

CSEs use their many shiny objects to distract searchers away from the sites they are trying to reach.

ATTACKS

Divert

CSE landing pages feature an abundance of links, with different price listings and product images, pointing customers in all sorts of directions away from the brand's own site.

Disorient

A lot of CSE advertising is automated. Many of the ads attempt to match the original query to the most relevant product on the site, which can sometimes lead to noise. For example, a search for "Apple" on Google might lead to a CSE ad promoting "iPhone 6s" in their search box, when in fact the person was searching for an Apple laptop.



WHEN MONSTERS ATTACK

How do you know if trademark bidders are targeting your brand?
Here are some of the key indicators of trademark bidding:

- Low click-through rate (CTR) on branded keywords
- High cost-per-click (CPC) on branded keywords
- Low ad position/rank on branded keywords
- Other advertisers appearing on branded keywords in [Auction Insights](#)
- Spikes in traffic from specific partners
- Excessively high conversion rates for specific partners
- Blank referrers
- Other suspicious activity (e.g. low quality leads, decreases in direct bookings, etc.)
- A sudden but meaningful drop in impression share

For a detailed description of each of these indicators and explanations on how to analyze the data you are finding, see our guide: [Tracking Down Trademark Bidders: 3 Places to Look.](#)

HOW DO YOU STOP THE MONSTERS?

Are you worried yet? Scared you may not be able to sleep at night, now that you are fully aware of these traffic-eating creatures targeting your branded terms? Don't fret. There are ways to combat the monsters and keep them at bay.

A thorough review of your SEM data may indicate trademark bidding, but to really know if you have a problem, you need to find the infringing ads. You might get lucky and find some infringements from manual searches, but only an automated solution provides a true shield of defense for your brand.

Try Manual Searches

Manual monitoring is daunting and ineffective. With a few techniques—such as searching from locations outside your office—you may stumble upon part of the picture. Don't confuse this with a comprehensive monitoring program.

Use Automation to Get the Full Picture

To really be thorough and monitor at scale, you need an automated solution. A tool like [BrandVerity's Paid Search Monitoring](#) can provide broad visibility while minimizing time spent on manual investigation. Wondering if automated monitoring is right for you brand? BrandVerity provides a complimentary demo tailored to the search engines, keywords, and geographies that matter to you. We can help you discover and stop monsters from stealing your traffic and terrorizing your PPC accounts. Let us show you how.

GET A FREE DEMO



About Us

Since 2008, BrandVerity has been providing services that protect brands and ensure that their marketing partners are on-brand and compliant. From our Seattle and London offices, we develop and support services that are simple, straightforward and extremely efficient. For more information, visit www.brandverity.com.

