digital element ®

Use Proxy Data to Ensure Location-Based Campaign Success

Today's digital world has become a mass online universe that constantly challenges marketers to find new and innovative ways to reach what is often a faceless and geographically dispersed audience.

If we've learned anything, it's that location provides valuable insight into what is typically an anonymous audience online. A plethora of contextual information can be gleaned from knowing internet users' locations in order to make marketing messages more personalized.

However, a growing amount of internet traffic is being masked through proxies. For example, online users wanting to surf the web anonymously often use proxies that can provide them with a means to hide their IP address from the rest of the world. By connecting to the internet through proxies, a device's IP address will not be shown but rather the IP of the proxy server. Whether used intentionally or unintentionally, proxies can significantly throw off targeted marketing campaigns. The expanded availability of low-cost IP-redirect options that run through geographically distributed hosting facilities have caused a proliferation of proxies. These include anonymizers, VPNs, and Tor services to name a few.

Marketers are Not IT Geeks So Why Is This Important?

A person's location can provide much more insight about who they are based on demographic and other lifestyle contextual assumptions, sometimes referred to as geotextual data or proximity intelligence. Developing context around an online user's current location helps in delivering more relevant, timely messages. Similarly, understanding the type of proxy a visitor is connecting to the internet with has become increasingly important to help online advertisers further optimize their campaigns and improve their overall performance.

Proxy Types that Often Warrant Red Flags

A number of different proxies exist in today's online world—for both legitimate and nefarious reasons. Detecting proxy traffic is an IP-based phenomenon. The presence and type of a proxy dictates how certain IP traffic is handled. For marketers, the ability to deploy technology that identifies and bypasses online users who may be masking their locations and digital personas means improvement in targeted campaigns with fewer wasted impressions.

The following types of proxies often warrant a red flag:

- **Anonymous:** Actual IP address of the end user is not available which often includes the use of services that change location to circumvent digital rights management, Tor points (free software for enabling anonymous communications), temporary proxies and other masking services.

- **Transparent:** Actual IP address of the end user is available via HTTP headers, although the value is not necessarily reliable (i.e. it can be spoofed).

- **Hosting:** Addresses belong to a hosting facility, and end users are not typically located in a hosting facility.

- **Corporate:** Generally considered harmless, their location can occasionally be a concern. Multiple users proxied through a central location or locations, and thus sharing a single network-apparent IP address, are not reliable.

- **Public:** Multiple users are proxied from a location allowing public internet access (i.e. libraries).

- **Education:** End users come from an educational institution with the .edu extension.

- **Blackberry:** All Blackberry users go through a centralized proxy location and thus cannot be accurately geotargeted.

- **"?":** A return that indicates there is no evidence to support proxy activity for a given IP address (Used to initially parse proxy vs. non-proxy online traffic).

3 Key Ways Proxy Information Improves Ad Efficiency and Performance:

1 Avoid Wasted Impressions

2 Fight Click Fraud

3 Enhance Attribution and Analytics

An Increasing Demand for Proxy Data

As the use of proxies has increased, so, too, has marketers' demand for reliable and accurate proxy data. Ad networks, analytics companies, video content providers, fraud-prevention solutions, and software providers with geographic rights restrictions stand to benefit the most.

In particular, the inclusion of proxy information in a marketer's data arsenal works to improve efficiency and performance of content and messages through: 1) Avoiding wasted impressions; 2) Fighting click fraud; and 3) Enhancing attribution and analytics.

For example, relying on a proxy's IP address location often leads to incorrect targeting and wasted impressions because the user is hiding his/her location behind a proxy. In the case of hosted or pay-per-click (PPC) ads, companies can utilize proxy data to combat malicious clicking that unnecessarily assesses charges to advertisers. Proxy information can also be incorporated into analytics to report on human versus non-human (i.e. invalid) ad traffic.

Proxy Data at Work

AppsFlyer

The global leader in mobile attribution and marketing analytics proactively uses proxy data to combat the real and growing problem of mobile ad fraud. It utilizes proxy data to give mobile marketers the clarity and confidence they need to optimize their campaigns and improve their overall performance by identifying responses from non-humans as well as uncovering uncertainties around their advertising traffic.

SIFT

A mobile advertising technology provider utilizing artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning includes proxy information with a full geolocation data arsenal to improve efficiency and performance of clients' advertising—helping them avoid wasted impressions and fight click fraud as well as enhance attribution and analytics.

BOLD MEDIA SOLUTIONS SUPPORT

An experienced systems integrator and software developer employs anonymous proxy and VPN databases to help add even more security for its digital rights management (DRM) solutions.

VŪBIQUITY PREMIUM CONTENT SERVICES

The leading global provider of premium content services uses geographic, proxy and VPN datasets within it Content as a Service (CaaS) platform to assist in processing incoming requests and delivering content to any point on the network on demand while managing entitlements and access to video assets based on the authentication of user rights and integration into the order process.

Delve Deeper for Comprehensive Data

Not all proxy data providers are created equal. Marketers should do their due diligence and delve deeper into how vendors proactively acquire, update and support this type of data. Reliable proxy data providers should offer the following:

- Ability to isolate a variety of proxies;
- 24/7 data gathering and identification processes;
- Data updates provided on at least a daily basis;
- Dedicated support teams focused solely on proxy data;
- Ability to communicate the methodology and how it applies to online advertising and content; and
- The number of customers using proxy data.

Sample Clients