

What Ghost Spam is and Why It's Bad

Ghost spam is an insidious little booger that likes to sneak in the back door of your Google Analytics home. It's unwanted and unloved, and it doesn't care. Think it's a nice statistics booster? Think again.

Ghost spam is pretty literally click bait. They really do sneak in the back door, and their goal is for you to get curious and go visit the site listed, to boost THEIR legitimate traffic. They can benefit in a variety of ways, including getting extra ad revenue or affiliate income.

The nastiest part of ghost spam is that they never actual see your beautiful site. Many ghost spammers are set up with a bot that randomly targets Google Analytics property IDs. Luckily for us, most of them target IDs that end in -1. This comes in handy when we implement my 'secret weapon' in a few lessons!

A lot of ghost spam URLs also resemble well-known sites. When you get a visit from what looks like a certain site whose name rhymes with Puffington Host, you may get a little thrill of excitement. But unless you received an email from them beforehand, make sure you double-check that URL. It may be hulffingtonpost.com, which is clearly ghost spam. (Yep, I was in that exact situation. And yes, it's quite a letdown!)

Ghost spam tends to look a lot alike. Some of it looks like hulffingtonpost.com, masquerading as a legitimate site. Some of it tries to lure you in with something along the lines of free-traffic.com. Still others will clearly be spam, like porn sites. Just stinking awesome, right?

They also tend to target your home page or occasionally a random page, like /category/blog/pg3/, which most people don't jump directly to on a first visit. They will show up as a New Visitor, which is another clue. If you aren't sure if something is ghost spam, DON'T JUST GO

VISIT THE SITE! Do a search for something like "what is XYZ.com?" or "is XYZ.com spam?" and go from there.

Mostly, ghost spam is just annoying. With the tricks I'm about to teach you, you can get rid of most of it, though. Just remember, don't visit the ghost spam sites! Good luck, and may the Force be with you!