

When travel marketing budgets soar, is ad fraud waiting to disrupt your plans?



What is invalid traffic?

Invalid traffic refers to any clicks or impressions that may artificially inflate an advertiser's costs. Where does it come from? It could be either accidental clicks or fraudulent activity—essentially, any activity that doesn't come from a real user with genuine interest is invalid and offers no value to the advertiser.

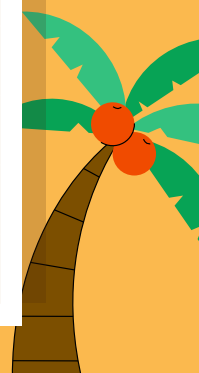


Your guide to invalid traffic and its impact on the business of travel

General invalid traffic (GIVT) vs. Sophisticated invalid traffic (SIVT)

GIVT is the easiest to detect. Commonly caused by web crawlers as they index web pages, it is not done with malicious intent. GIVT can also come from accidental clicks, and internal traffic.

The trickier clicks and measurements are what is known as SIVT. This is more difficult to detect than GIVT, and represents actively fraudulent traffic created to drain advertiser's ad spend and create inaccurate data. SIVT can come from hijacked devices, adware, competitor clicks, or advertising botnets. It's bad news for you and your budget.



Who in travel can be impacted?

If you're a marketer for one of the following, you should definitely keep reading.



Airlines



Hotels



Travel agents and aggregators



Experience marketplaces



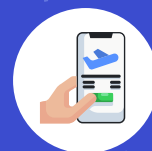
Tour Operators



Cruise Companies



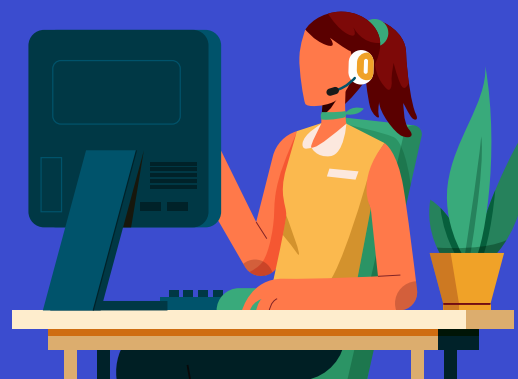
Tourism Boards



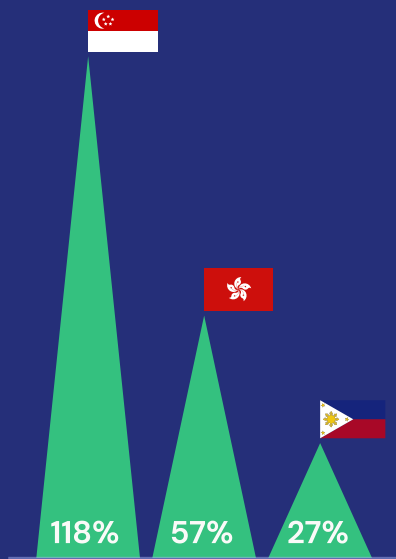
Travel apps

However, any business or organisation marketing in the travel sector, could be impacted by ad fraud and invalid traffic.

We'll get into the dangers of ad fraud, such as wasted media spend, compromised campaign data and misplaced investment later, but for now let's look at the trends and opportunities in the travel market.



Travel is back, but there's still some way to go...



Before the pandemic, Asia Pacific was the world's largest regional travel market. And while growth has returned to the region as a new normal is realised, it's not set to return to this top spot until 2025.^[1]

When we focus on specific markets, there's some promising statistics. Comparing March 2023 to March 2019, leisure flight bookings saw an increase of 118% in Singapore, 57% in Hong Kong and 27% in the Philippines.^[2]

The direction of the travel market in India should offer strong hope too. International travel had reached a 99.5% recovery rate by March 2023, and large aircraft fleet orders by airlines in the country show strong confidence in future growth.^[3]

What's held up the recovery and growth?

While growth in some markets may be hopeful, there are factors still impacting the recovery and growth of travel around the region:

01 Economic factors like elevated inflation,^[4] elevated interest rates and the tightening of credit lending conditions could be holding people back from travel and making people more selective about what trips they do take.^[5]

02 China's delayed re-opening and slower than expected return to international travel has impacted the region as a whole. A lack of affordable flights and new travel visa complications have slowed China's outbound recovery.^[6]

03 Some people just aren't ready to travel again yet, with one potential reason being lingering anxiety from the pandemic.



Key travel trends in the region:

As travel has returned post-pandemic, some interesting trends have continued or emerged:



01 The value of experiences

A preference for experiences over material possessions continues to ring true with consumers. Spending on experiences is up 65% compared to 2019, as people look to make the most of life after the pandemic.^[7]

02 Getting back to business

And work travel is back in a big way, with business and leisure travel growing at the same pace. After a period without face-to-face meetings and the ability to collaborate with on-the-ground teams, people across Asia Pacific are keen to get moving again. While the new remote working culture allows people to work from anywhere.^[8]



03 Longer stays and the rise of 'bleisure' travel

While people may be travelling less, they could well be travelling for longer. Travellers are booking longer stays in Airbnb homes (over 28 days), a trend that could be linked to increased flexibility for remote working and so called 'workcations'.^[9] 90% of decision makers agree the expanding hybrid/remote workforce will significantly increase the amount of business travel over the next decade.^[10]



So what do these changes and challenges mean for marketers and how they can drive growth? Next, we'll look at how marketers adapt to this new landscape and maximise their ROI.

Marketing in this new travel landscape

So how do travel marketers need to adapt in this new environment?
Here's some tips.

Be more tailored and targeted with mini campaigns

Changing preferences demand changing messaging. How can you appeal to budget-watching travellers? Or attract eco-conscious consumers looking for lower impact trips? How do you attract travellers looking to balance work and leisure? By opting to target different segments and diverse audiences at different times, as opposed to large brand campaigns, you better answer these specific consumer needs.

Think beyond seasonality

While travel may feel like a seasonal business, the moments of inspiration and research for customers can happen anytime. Especially in a tough economic climate where people are planning well in advance or travelling off-peak to get a good deal. You need to be always-on to ensure you stay top of mind for prospective travellers, regardless of when they intend on setting off.

Get as much first-party data as you can

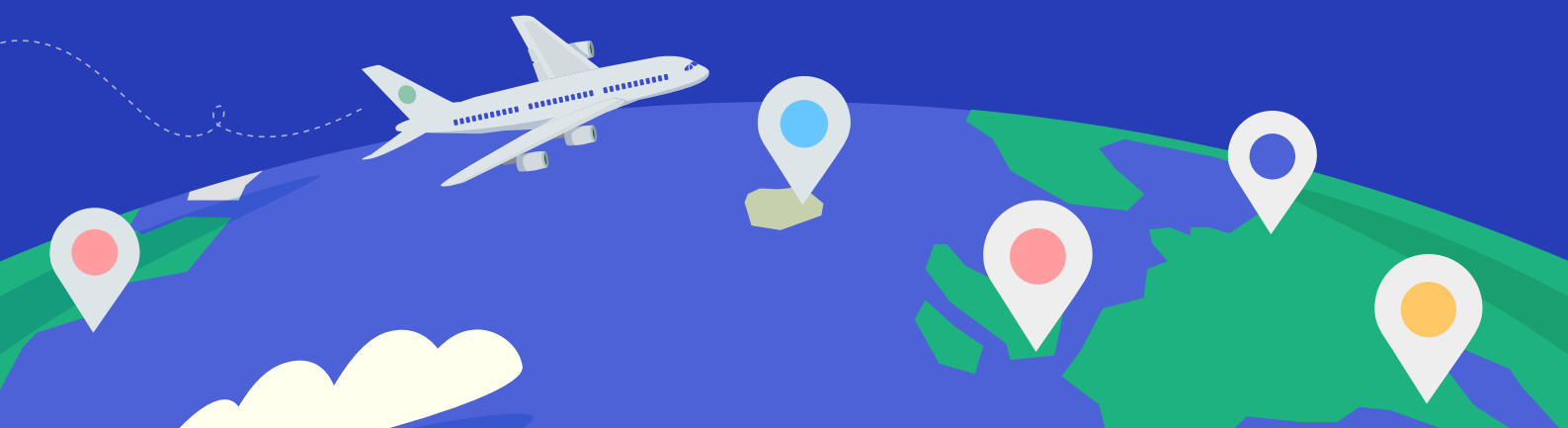
To better reach and convert your customers, you need to better understand them and their needs. This all comes down to getting as much first-party digital experience data and analytics as you can.

Be a bigger part of your customers' journeys

Travel research happens just around anywhere, it's not just search engines and websites. Travellers are increasingly inspired by social media and influencer content. So you need to spread your marketing to meet potential travellers where they are and build brand recall for when they're ready to book. How can you use social media and influencer marketing to drive demand and create FOMO? Which influencers align with your brand identity and your target audience? Are there opportunities to partner with brands outside of travel to touch people's lives in other ways?^{[1][12]}

Are travel apps catching up with passports in the packing list?

In the Asia-Pacific (APAC) Region, 83% of smartphone owners already have a travel-related app installed, and the competition for space in travellers' phones and budgets has never been fiercer.^[13]



The right message, the right media, but is something bigger going wrong?



So with so much opportunity in the market, and budgets still squeezed after the pandemic, it's clear that marketers need to make every dollar count.

And there's another plot twist; fraudsters are seeing their opportunity grow too. Infact, travel is one of the industries hardest hit by ad fraud. The global travel advertising market faces a \$127 billion ad fraud problem and APAC makes up a significant portion of this.^[14]

This means that even if you craft compelling content, it might not be reaching the right people and fraud is burning through your budget in the process.

Many travel marketers use Pay-Per-Install performance networks, which are paid a fee for every installation they drive.

However, these networks deliver over 50 percent invalid traffic on average, resulting in fraudulent installs and misattribution of post-install events such as flight and hotel bookings.

We worked with a leading Australian travel company and found 14,000 invalid clicks impacting their PPC efforts in a single two week period, translating to \$33,000 wasted a month on bad traffic and clicks.

This means that the hard work and budget that goes into delivering great campaigns could be wasted with the impact of ad fraud. We've found that bots make up an alarming 80% of invalid traffic experienced by operators in the travel sector, an alarmingly high figure compared to averages of 15-30% in other industries.

In short, IVT is bad news for both your budget and performance. Budget is eaten up with zero ROI and poor performance gets hidden by misleading metrics. It's a perfect storm to make your job harder.

But the good news is ad fraud doesn't have to disrupt your ambitious plans – with the right safeguards in place, you can reap the rewards of a booming travel market.



“But my MMP will cover this, so I’m all good, right?”

You might think your Mobile Measurement Partner can help you avoid fraud, but MMPs lack the insight to identify invalid clicks or those from fraudulent sources, which can lead you to make marketing decisions based on incorrect data.

So, where to start on your ad fraud protection journey?



There's two simple steps for travel marketers looking to tackle the dangers of ad-fraud and invalid traffic:



01

Understand the scale of the problem and its impact on your ad budgets



02

Identify a third-party partner that has the technology and expertise to make an immediate impact and give an unbiased appraisal of your performance

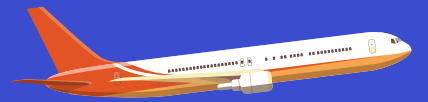
Real-time multi-layer protection is just the ticket



The right platform can give marketers real-time insights into their campaigns at the click level. This includes information about where clicks are coming from, what keywords are being used, and what devices are being used. This can then be used to stop bot-driven traffic, cap clicks, and reinvest budget more efficiently, as it happens.

With this smart automation and real-time strategy, you can optimise and more efficiently deploy your campaign budgets as the campaign runs, helping to achieve maximum ROI and ROAS.





To ensure omni-channel protection



Protect your user acquisition plans for mobile app marketing



Reduce your CPA and boost conversion with PPC protection



Defend against online affiliate marketing fraud on third-party sites



Get yourself a first-class solution

TrafficGuard's leading solutions proactively stop your ads from showing to sources of invalid traffic, protecting you from ad fraud. Our platform enables marketers to focus time and effort on optimisation and growth and leave fraud fighting to TrafficGuard.

To help you understand the impact of ad fraud and invalid traffic on your marketing and how TrafficGuard could help you unlock new opportunities, sign up for a free trial audit today.

About TrafficGuard

TrafficGuard is an award-winning invalid traffic and ad fraud prevention solution provider, helping advertisers to avoid wasted spend and unlock the best outcomes. Powered by A.I and machine learning, TrafficGuard prevents invalid traffic by changing the attribution journey of every click & conversion in real-time, ensuring that your ad spend is reaching to genuine users and driving growth. This also keeps your performance data clean, and helps you scale and optimise your advertising confidently. TrafficGuard is trusted to protect ad spend of leading global businesses including GoJek, Lalamove, and eCommerce giants Bukalapak.

Learn more about TrafficGuard's
comprehensive ad fraud protection.

Start your Free Trial →

Appendix

- [1] <https://www.phocuswright.com/Travel-Research/Research-Updates/2023/apac-expected-to-regain-top-spot-as-the-worlds-largest-regional-travel-market-by-2025>
- [2] <https://www.mastercardservices.com/en/reports-insights/asia-pacific-travel-trends-2023-back-business>
- [3] <https://www.travelweekly-asia.com/Travel-News/Travel-Trends/India-domestic-travel-booms-international-follows-suit>
- [4] <https://www.asiaone.com/lifestyle/whats-inflating-your-travel-expenses-2023>
- [5] <https://www.unwto.org/news/tourism-on-track-for-full-recovery-as-new-data-shows-strong-start-to-2023>
- [6] <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-07-09/millions-of-chinese-staying-home-shackle-southeast-asian-growth#xj4y7vzkg>
- [7] <https://www.thestar.com.my/lifestyle/travel/2023/04/27/when-it-comes-to-travel-industry-rebound-south-east-asia-wins>
- [8] <https://www.travelweekly-asia.com/Travel-News/Travel-Trends/6-key-insights-into-the-thriving-travel-industry-of-2023>
- [9] <https://www.thestar.com.my/lifestyle/travel/2023/04/27/when-it-comes-to-travel-industry-rebound-south-east-asia-wins>
- [10] <https://www.phocuswire.com/Mastercard-report-sees-business-travel-tipping-point>
- [11] <https://econsultancy.com/travel-marketing-trends-2023/>
- [12] <https://www.warc.com/newsandopinion/opinion/apac-travel-and-hospitality-in-2023-its-all-about-the-digital-experience/5999>
- [13] <https://www.storyly.io/post/apac-region-sees-explosive-growth-in-travel-related-super-apps>
- [14] <https://www.trafficguard.ai/resources/defending-travel-battling-cyber-criminals-ad-fraud>

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