

Partnërka in Crime: An Insider View of the Deceptive Affiliate Marketing Ecosystem

Victor Le Pochat

DistriNet, KU Leuven (Belgium)



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More

Elon Musk To Step Back From Tesla And SpaceX, Jumps on Quantum Computing Financial Tech



most viewed



Venezuela crisis: Maduro claims victory over 'deranged' coup attempt



Trump Russia: Mueller criticized attorney general's memo on findings



Live Venezuela crisis: Maduro claims coup has been 'defeated' – as it happened



Japan welcomes new emperor Naruhito as Reiwa era begins



Box jellyfish: Australian researchers find antidote for world's most venomous creature

Smart Investing That Makes You \$9288 in 5 Hours And Cures Poverty

Our smart investing can make you thousands in less than 7 days, and will help cure poverty while you earn!



Partners



Elon Musk used in fake AI videos to promote financial scam



What was claimed

Australians can "get rich quick" by investing in Elon Musk's financial scheme, Quantum AI.

The verdict

False. Videos using artificial intelligence technology to show Elon Musk promoting a financial venture are designed to mislead people into investing in a financial scam.



AI doctored footage of business magnate Elon Musk is being used in social media to lure investors to a fraudulent stock trading platform.


Deceptive Affiliate Marketing

Warning: Due to extremely high media demand, we will close regi

Immediate Edge v3.0 ABOUT US

Immediate Edge 3.0

Revolutionizing Cryptocurrency Trading: Introducing the Latest



What is the Immediate Edge 3.0?

30-DAY KETOSIS

THE EASIEST WAY TO BURN FAT



CoreSlim
ADVANCED WEIGHT LOSS FORMULA
KETO
Natural Dietary Supplement
800MG
Supports Weight Management
Helps Energy Levels
60 CAPSULES
COUNT

- ✓ **BURN FAT FASTER THAN EVER**
Doctors, nutritionists, celebrities all know the fat burning benefits of being in ketosis!
- ✓ **BURN FAT FOR ENERGY, NOT CARBS!**
When your body is in Ketosis, it is burning Fat Cells for energy instead of Carbs!
- ✓ **LOVE THE WAY YOU FEEL!**
Burning fat for energy instead of carbs gives your body 225% more energy!

GET YOUR RISK FREE BOX!
100% ALL NATURAL PURE KETOSIS FORMULA

Win the brand new iPhone 12 Pro

Hurry! This offer will expire soon!


Please enter your email

EMAIL

☐ I am over 18 and I have accepted the terms.

Continue

Scanning Done: 2020, Oct 12 13:22:05



Install now:
Scan viruses / Farewell to virus / Stay safe 24/7 with real-time protection

To continue, first verify your phone number:

07

Example: (07xxxxxxxxx)

Deceptive Affiliate Marketing

What is it?

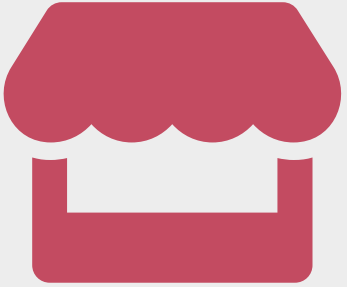
Who is behind it?

How big is it?

What to do about it?

What is it?

Affiliate marketing



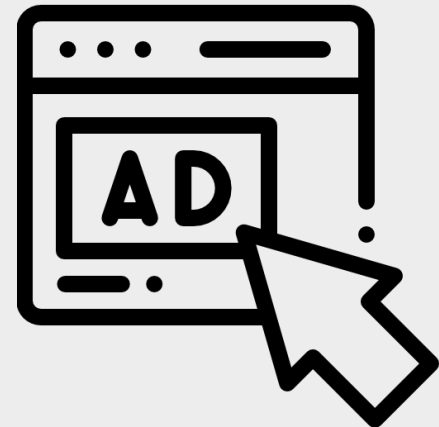
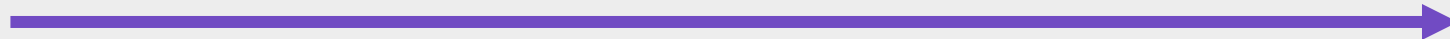
Merchant



Affiliate



outsource promotion



Affiliate marketing



Merchant



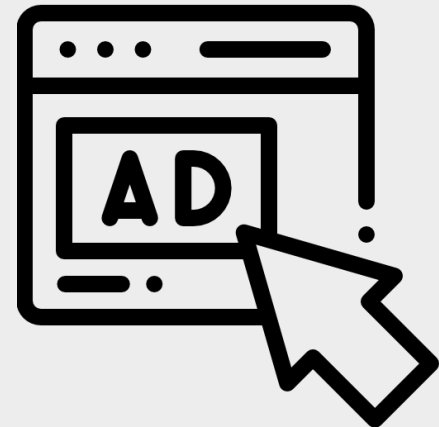
Affiliate network

manage interactions

outsource promotion



Affiliate



Benign

Legitimate
affiliate
programs

amazonassociates

Promote, earn and grow with the
AliExpress Affiliate Program

Affiliate marketing

Benign

Legitimate
affiliate
programs

(Amazon,
AliExpress, ...)

Malicious

- Illegal pharma
 - Counterfeits
 - Ransomware
 - Malware
("malvertising")
 - ...
- affiliate programs*

Affiliate marketing

Benign

Legitimate
*affiliate
programs*

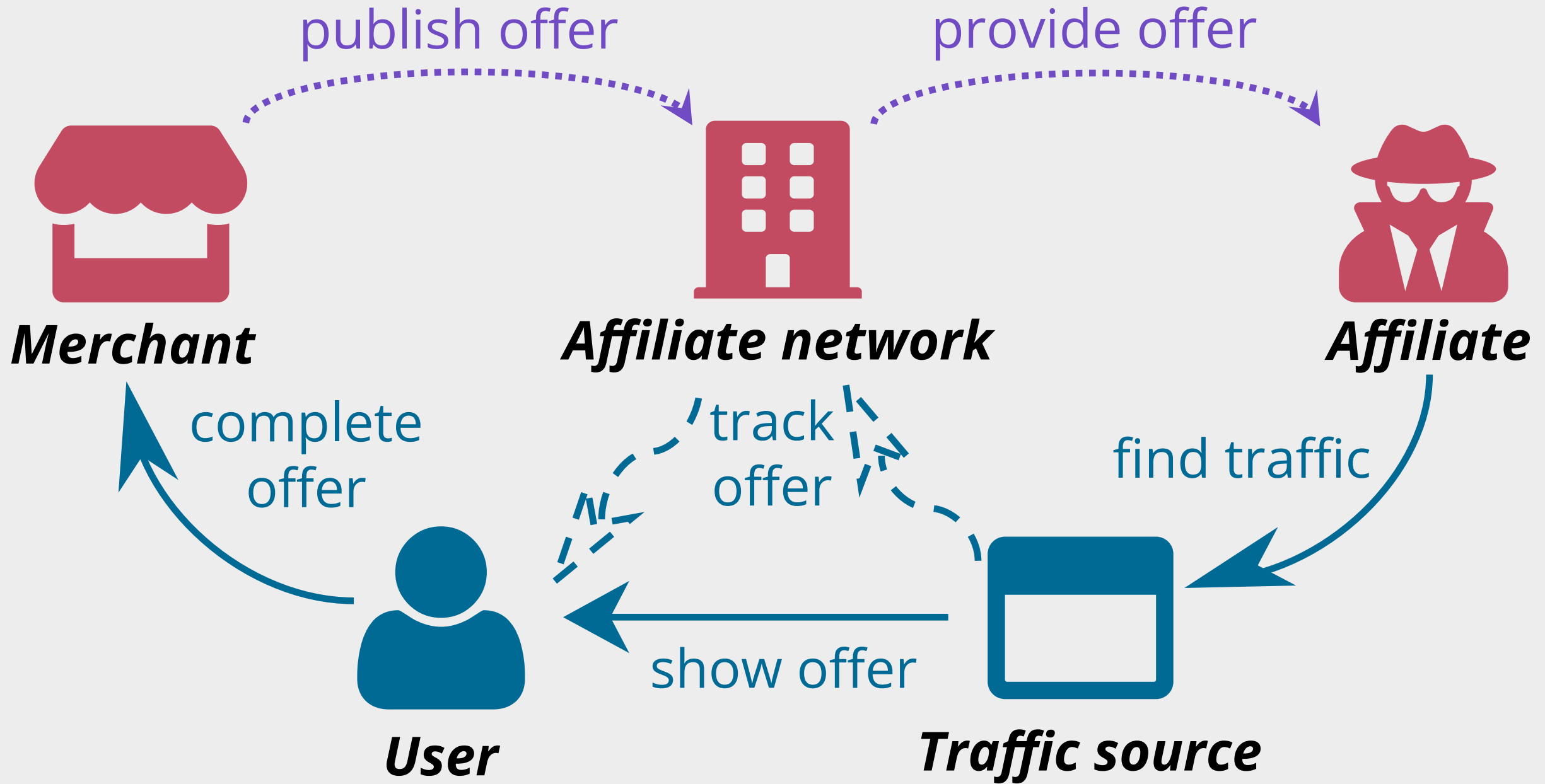
(Amazon,
AliExpress, ...)

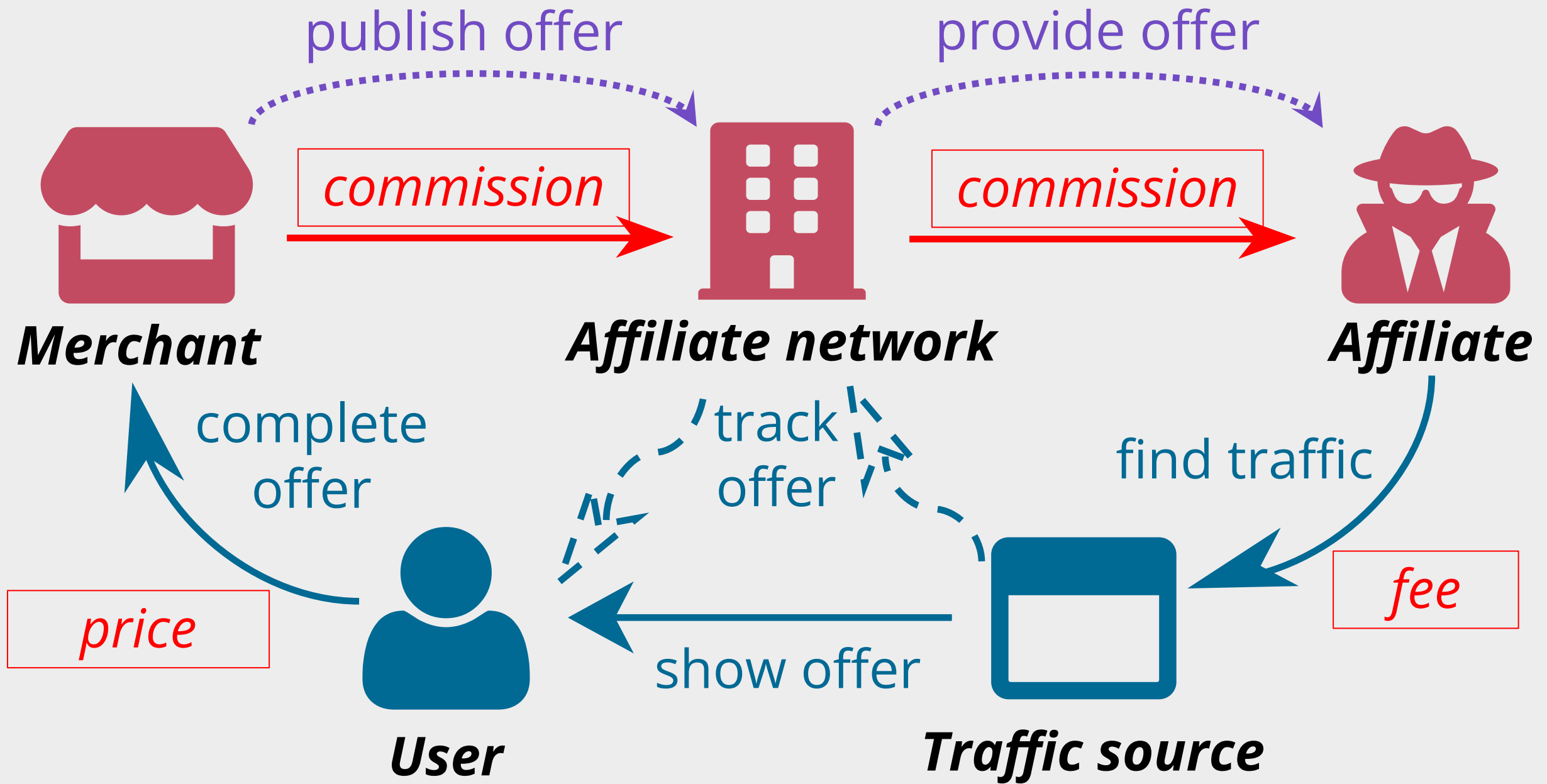
Deceptive Affiliate Marketing

- Products/services of **low quality**
- Soliciting and selling **personal data**
- **Deceptive** terms/claims/endorsements
- No **mainstream** recognition

Malicious

- Illegal pharma
 - Counterfeits
 - Ransomware
 - Malware ("malvertising")
 - ...
- affiliate programs*





Last Sale
58 Seconds Ago

Best Value



5 Bottles

This package is reserved for people who truly want to change their lives.

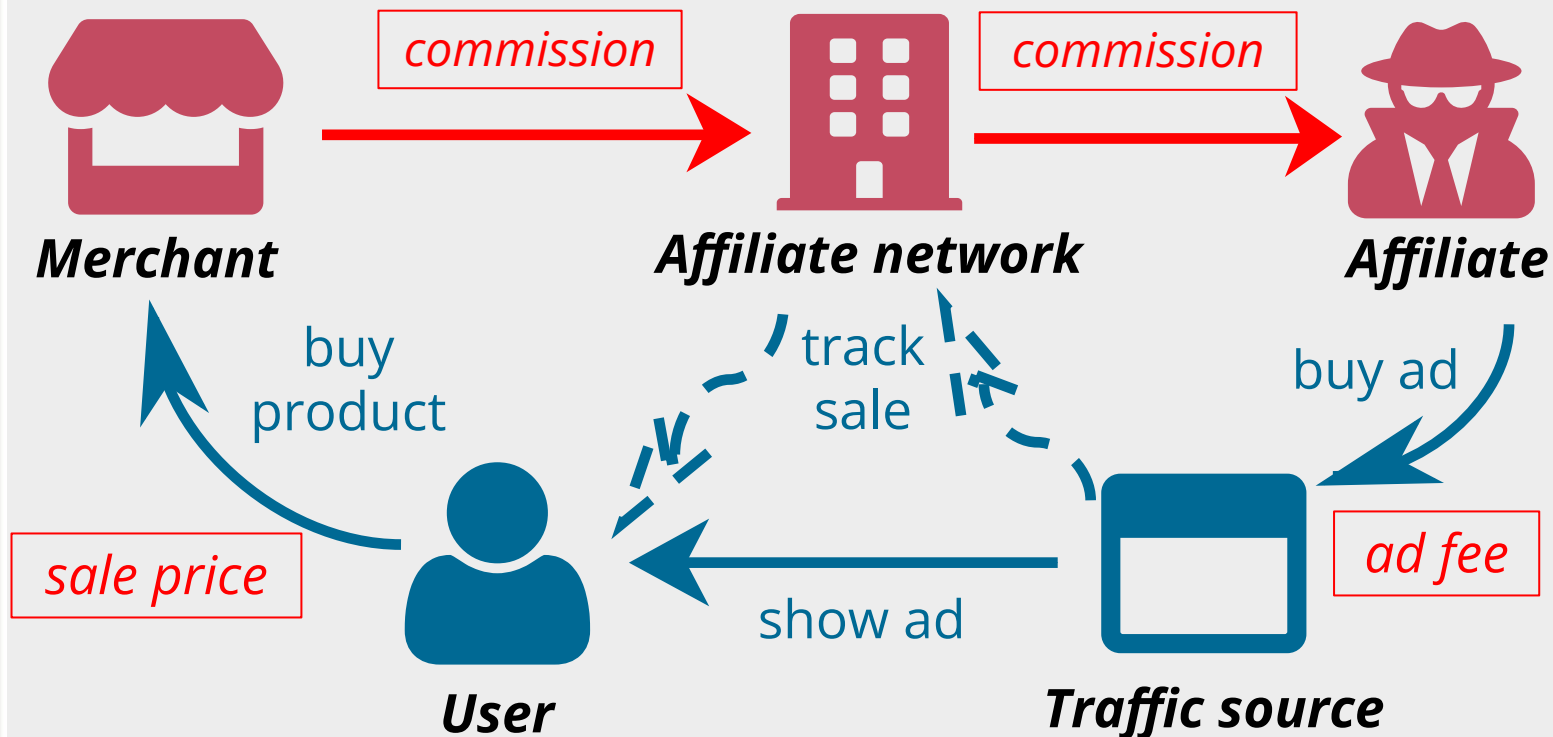
- ✓ You will receive 5 bottles once.
- ✓ SAVE 50% WITH THIS KIT
- ✓ FREE DELIVERY
- ✓ CUSTOMERS OFTEN LOSE OVER 3,15 ST WITH A 5-MONTH APPLICATION.

before:

~~£89.95~~

£33.83

Price per product



omyketo.com ← ggljjk.cc ← 2024krinstock.shop ← facebook.com

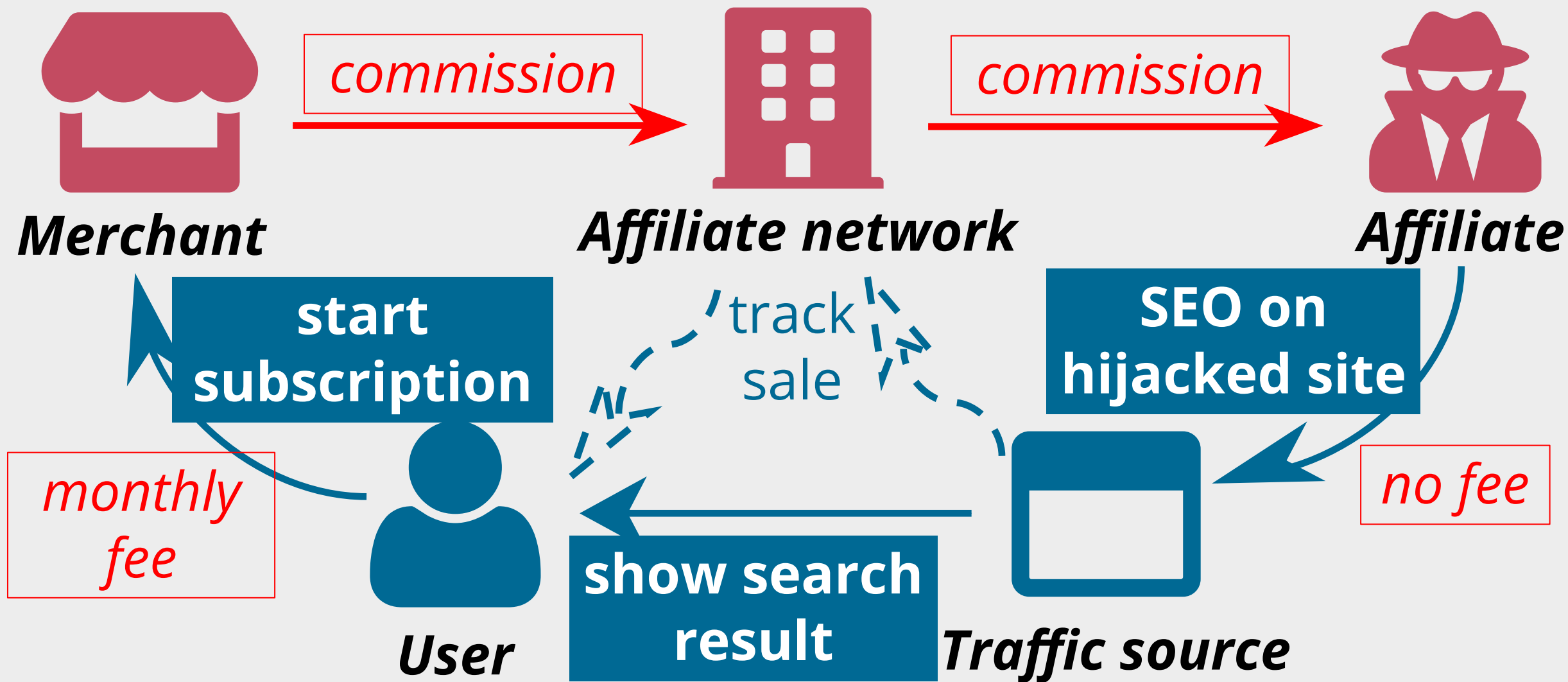
Asa Priestley
Sponsored
Library ID: 446485911422280

🔥 Verwandle dich schnell – spüre den Effekt!
👉 100% natürliche Transformation
👉 Deine Freunde werden dich nicht wiedererkennen!

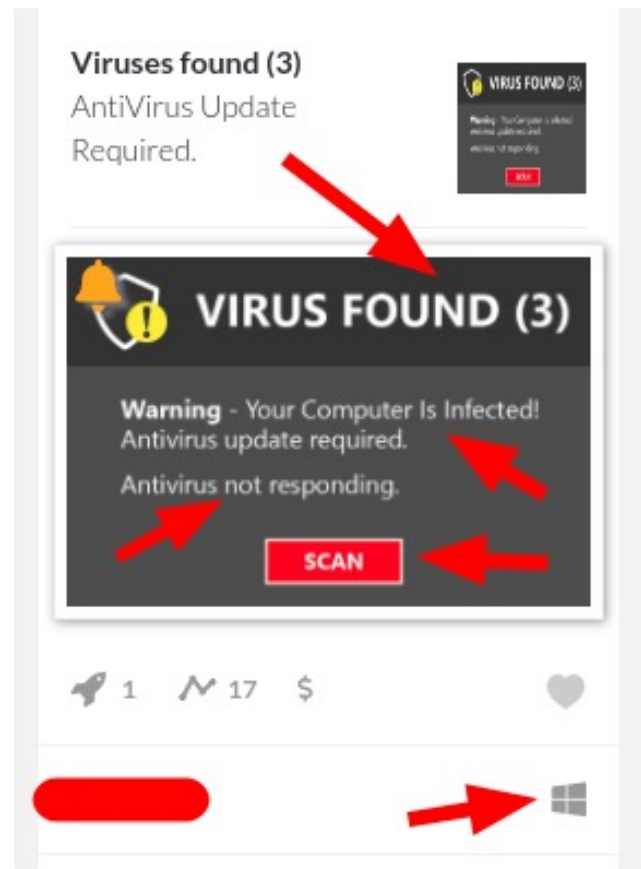
GROSSE TRÄUME,
SCHNELLES ABNEHMEN –
ERREICHE DEINEN ERFOLG

2024KRINSTOCK.SHOP
In dieser Saison zu deinem Traumkörper

Learn more



This is a Windows antivirus creative, it has an aggressive approach. This might work well, just keep in mind that some networks don't allow such aggressive creatives. I also like the built-in CTA button.



PUSHGROUND

<https://www.pushground.com/blog/ad-creatives-review>

BAN YOUR *adcombo* STEREOTYPES ABOUT FB

26.4.2018

Guys, every publisher knows *how easy to catch a ban from Facebook and how hard to get rid of it*. Ban reasons are more than numerous – a fake account, not credible information, complaints about your account, suspicious activity and any [FB Ad Policies](#) violation.

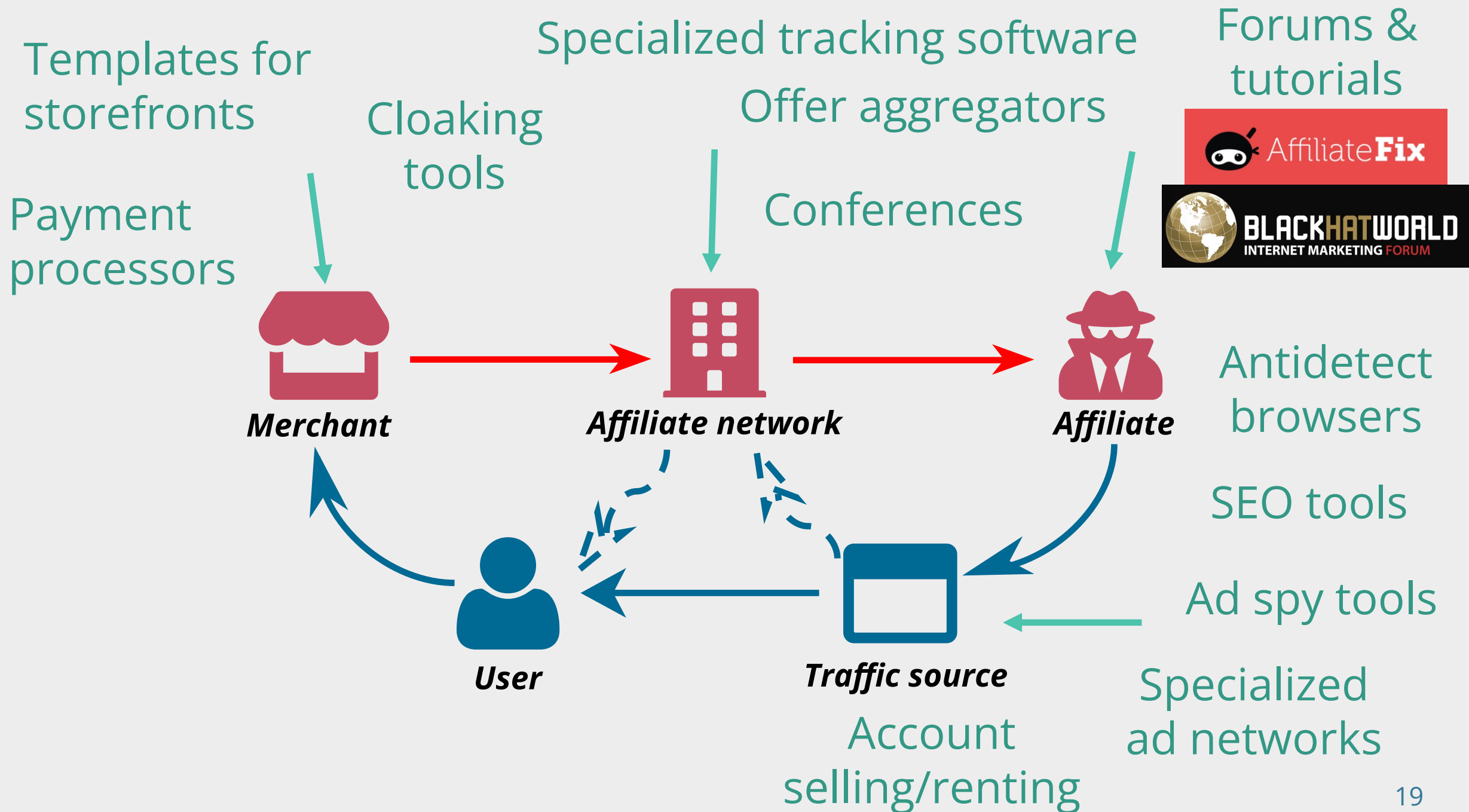
<https://web.archive.org/web/20220524181427/https://blog.adcombo.com/ban-your-stereotypes-about-fb/>

Washington state AG and Facebook target “clickjackers”

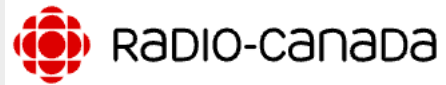
SEATTLE – If you use Facebook, the world's top social networking site, you may have “liked” an Internet scheme without even knowing it – and unwittingly helped spread the scam to your Facebook friends. But today, Washington State Attorney General Rob McKenna and Facebook announced the latest step in an ongoing fight against spammers and scammers: a lawsuit against the co-owners of [Adscend Media, LLC](#), an ad network that is alleged to develop and encourage others to spread spam through misleading and deceptive tactics, including the one known as “clickjacking.”

“We don’t ‘like’ schemes that illegally trick Facebook users into giving up personal information or paying for unwanted subscription services through spam,” McKenna said during a news conference at Facebook’s Seattle Office. “We applaud

<https://www.atg.wa.gov/news/news-releases/washington-state-ag-and-facebook-target-clickjackers>



“... the empire linked to Mr. Keezer generates **annual** revenues of **\$100 million**.”



“Gryn estimated that users of his tracking software place **\$400 million** worth of ads **a year** on Facebook and an additional **\$1.3 billion** elsewhere.”

**Bloomberg
Businessweek**

ALLEGED DECEPTIVE ADVERTISING & BILLING PRACTICES

Over 5 years,
consumers paid
\$179 million



Pitched products falsely
claiming to eliminate
wrinkles, add muscle,
or lose weight

Ran scam using fake
celebrity endorsements



Continued to charge
consumers who thought
they signed up for one-
time “free trial offers”

Source: Federal Trade Commission | FTC.gov



How do we get *inside*?

Offer aggregators



...



Bitcoin Billionaire (weekly payments)_CPA_AU_KW_QA_OM_AE_BH_MY
ChameleonAds #Finance

\$ 600.00



Sweepstakes - iphone 12 pro - \$18 - US/CA/AUS/NZ
LoadedVIP #Sweepstake @US/CA/AU/NZ

\$ 18.00



11863|Careem_SA_Android_NonRewarded_CPI_nonin
AddAttain #Mobile #Android @SA

\$ 0.50



MyeBooky - iPhone SE LP48 FR - CC Submit
The Lead Wolves #Sweepstake @FR

€ 24.00



Valued Opinions - US - DOI
Affilade Media #DOI @US

\$ 0.80



3-Bureau One-Time Report (PPS) - Financial/Credit Score - US
Ambalaya Affiliate #Finance #PPS @US

\$ 10.00



(15678) [WEB+WAP] Rox Casino - UA - CPA
Rainmaker #Mobile #Casino #Gambling #Beauty @UA

\$ 20.00
23

Offer aggregators

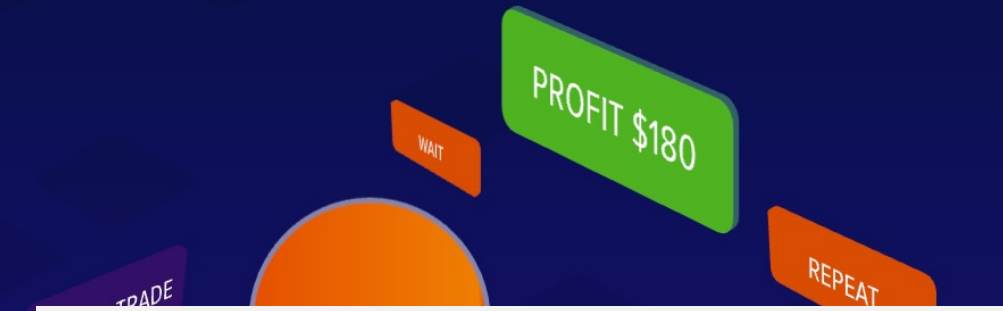


...

- › **Ground truth**
- › Unprecedented metadata
- › Across affiliate networks
- › Across categories
- › Across countries, demographics, ...

Smart Investing
That Makes You
\$9288 in 5 Hours
And Cures Poverty

Our smart investing can make you thousands in less than 7 days, and will help cure poverty while you earn!



QuantumAI English
Vertical: Cryptocurrency
Network: Algo Affiliates
Commission: \$600

<https://the-quantum-ai.com/>

Last Sale
58 Seconds Ago

Best Value



5 Bottles

This package is reserved for people who truly want to change their lives.

- ✓ You will receive 5 bottles once.
- ✓ SAVE 50% WITH THIS KIT
- ✓ FREE DELIVERY
- ✓ CUSTOMERS OFTEN LOSE OVER 3,15 ST WITH A 5-MONTH APPLICATION.

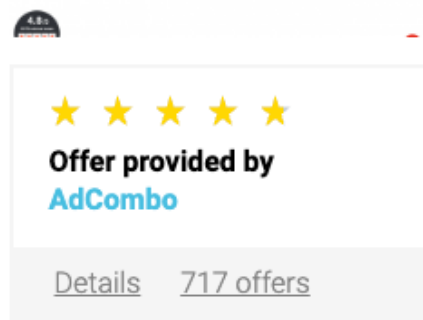
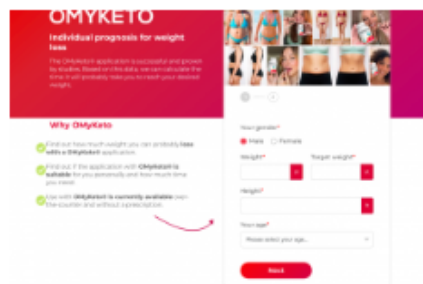
before:

~~£89.95~~

£33.83

Price per product

OMYKeto - GB, IE



Landing preview

Offer page

Join now

Payout

\$85

CPA

Status

Active

Created at

11 / 04 / 24 (Updated at: 20/06/24)

Geo

IE, UK

Main category

Nutra & Beauty

Asa Priestley
Sponsored
Library ID: 446485911422280

- 🔥 Verwandle dich schnell – spüre den Effekt!
- 👉 100% natürliche Transformation
- 👀 Deine Freunde werden dich nicht wiedererkennen!



GROSSE TRÄUME,
SCHNELLES ABNEHMEN –
ERREICHE DEINEN ERFOLG

2024KRINSTOCK.SHOP
In dieser Saison zu deinem Traumkörper

Learn more

omyketo.com ← ggljjk.cc ← 2024krinstock.shop ← facebook.com

Offer aggregators



...

- › **Ground truth**
 - › Unprecedented metadata
 - › Across affiliate networks
 - › Across categories
 - › Across countries, demographics, ...
-
- › 23 aggregators (16 EN + 7 RU)
 - › Daily scraping (4 years)
 - › Postprocessing: normalization, merging, mapping (1-time)

Which scams are in it?

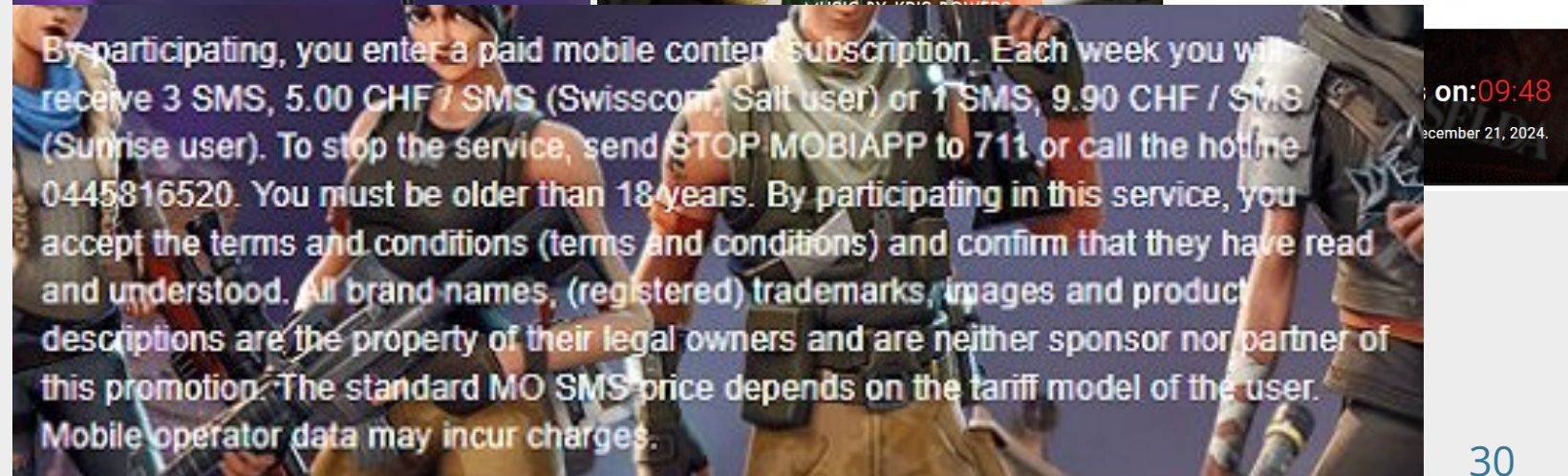
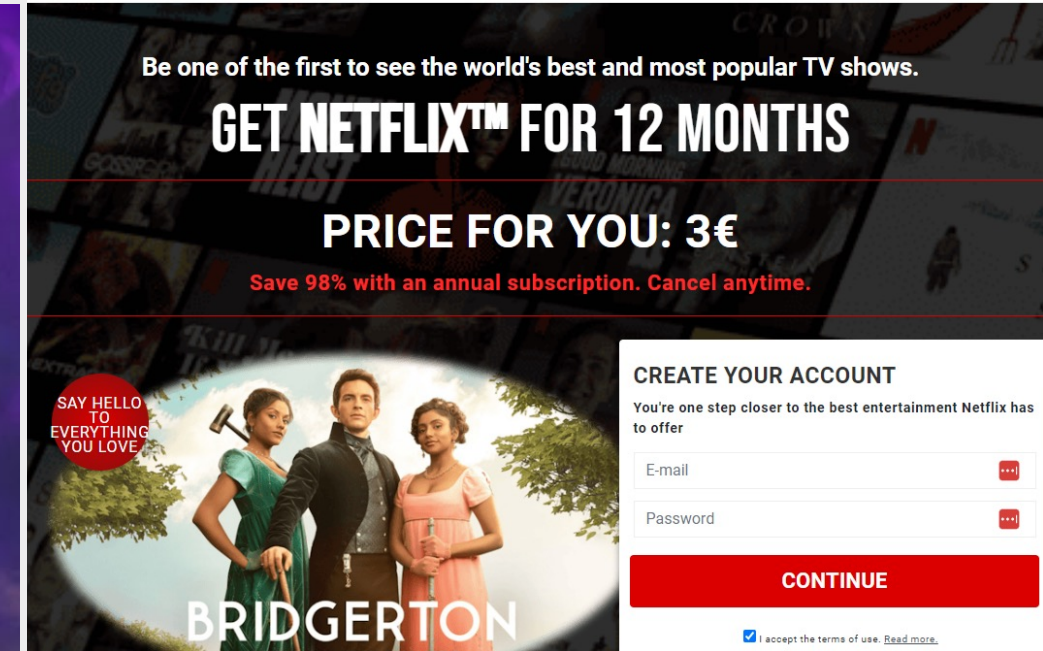
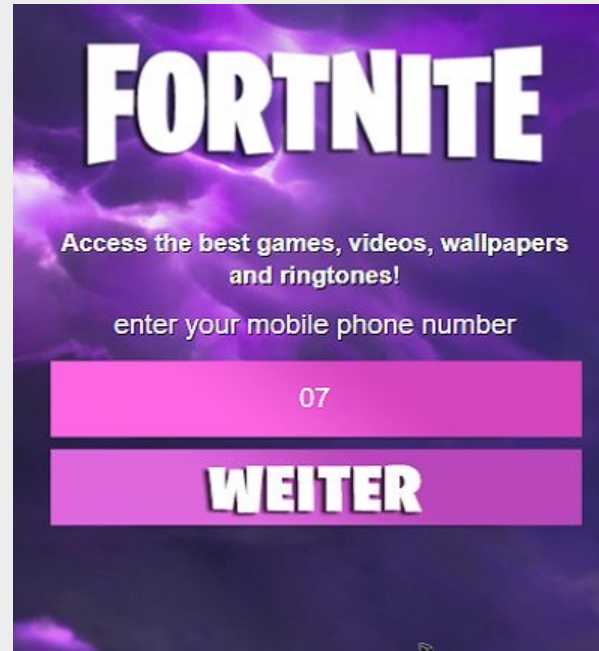
**Dating/Adult
Entertainment
Finance
Gambling
Games
Health/Beauty
Software
Sweepstakes
E-commerce**

**Deceptive
Affiliate
Marketing**

9 verticals

Dating/Adult
Entertainment
Finance
Gambling
Games
Health/Beauty
Software
Sweepstakes
E-commerce

Hidden subscriptions ("free trial")



Dating/Adult
Entertainment
Finance
Gambling
Games
Health/Beauty
Software
Sweepstakes
E-commerce

Exaggerated claims

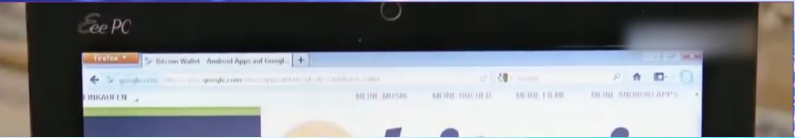
WARNING: Due to extremely high media demand, we will close registration as of 2023-12-12 - HURRY! 05:17

BitcoinEvolution EXCLUSIVE FOR CANADA RESIDENTS   Charlotte P. just made \$102

Crypto Is Making People Rich

And You Can Become The Next Millionaire...

See what famous people like **Bill Gates** and **Eric Schmidt** have to say



START CHANGING YOUR LIFE TODAY



30-DAY KETOSIS
THE EASIEST WAY TO BURN FAT

BURN FAT FASTER THAN EVER
Doctors, nutritionists, celebrities all know the fat burning benefits of being in ketosis!

TELL US WHERE TO SEND YOUR PACKAGE!

First Name

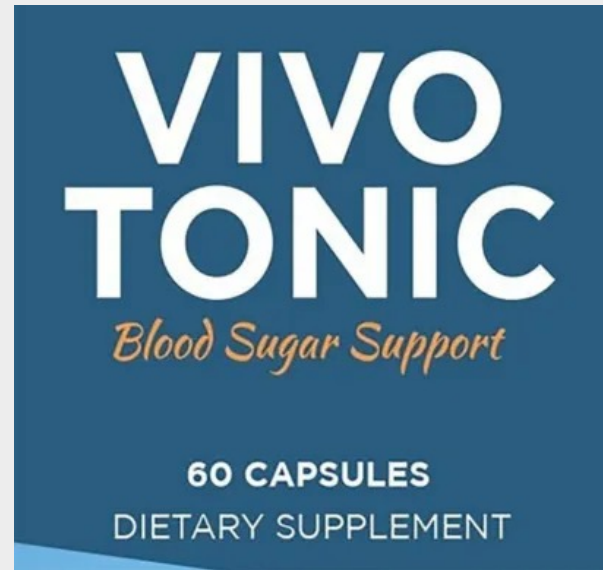
Last Name

Phone Number

Address

Dating/Adult
Entertainment
Finance
Gambling
Games
Health/Beauty
Software
Sweepstakes
E-commerce

Dangerous products?



STOP WASTING MONEY ON DIRTY, UNSTABLE ELECTRICITY

- ⚡ Quickly and Easily Stabilize Your Homes Electrical Current
- ⚡ Reduce Harmful Dirty Electricity From Your Home
- ⚡ Protect and Prolong the Life of Your Appliances & Electronics



Fast Shipping
in the US



No-Hassle
Returns



Guaranteed Safe
and Secure Checkout

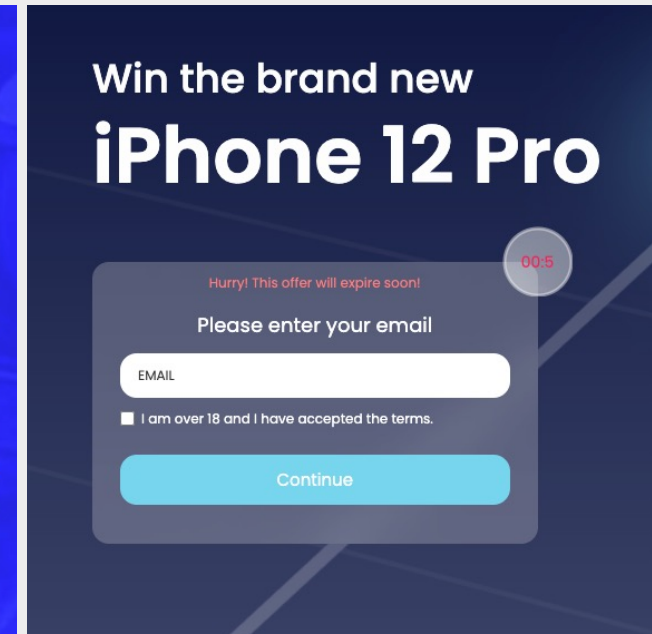


60 Day Money
Back Guarantee



Dating/Adult
Entertainment
Finance
Gambling
Games
Health/Beauty
Software
Sweepstakes
E-commerce

Brand abuse



Your Windows may be vulnerable to viruses and other threats!

Norton 360 antivirus protects your family from viruses, spyware,



Dating/Adult
Entertainment
Finance
Gambling
Games
Health/Beauty
Software
Sweepstakes
E-commerce



@LidlGB 
@LidlGB · [Follow](#)



We've been informed that a fraudulent Lidl competition has been circulating the internet and they are charging participants to enter. We are working hard to get this taken down ASAP, but please be alert to any suspicious competitions or giveaways claiming to come from us. Lidl GB

3:56 PM · May 29, 2020



64



Reply



Copy link

[Read 3 replies](#)

NEWS

**Walmart warns customers
against fake social media
giveaway**



[Avalaht](#)

[Coop](#) ▾

[Kliendikaart](#) ▾

[Pakkumised](#) ▾

[Tule tööle](#) ▾

[Kauplused](#)

Tähelepanu! Coopi nimel levib pettus

18.02.2022 | [Uudised](#)

Coopi nimel on sotsiaalmeedias taas levimas pettus, milles lubatakse auhinnaks iPhone 13 PRO MAX. S inimestel ekraanil lotopiletid „kraapida“ ja auhinna kättesaamiseks palutakse sisestada enda kaardianc klientidelt info, et andmete sisestamisel liitub inimene tasulise teenusega, mille esimesed kaks päeva r päeval teenus uuendab end automaatselt, mis maksab juba ligi 50€. See kõik on pettus!

Dating/Adult
Entertainment
Finance
Gambling
Games
Health/Beauty
Software
Sweepstakes
E-commerce

Fake dating profiles
Fake content platforms
Fake investment platforms
Unregulated platforms
Hidden subscriptions
Fake supplements, ...
Scareware
Fake contests
Useless products

Claim your discounted package
below while stocks last
23:00

Subscribe to content-crave.com today! Our service provides you with fantastic content more. This service will cost \$7.99 per week after one day free trial. Age 18+ only. To end the not affiliated with, sponsored by or endorsed by any of the third party providers whose pro

Don't mess around with your nutrition. Blend it!

Discount -40%
LAST CHANCE

Last chance to grab this HUGE promotion

Get 40% Discount!

**Dark
patterns**



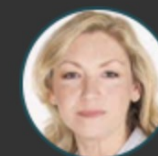
Ruth Perez from Tennessee, USA
purchased **3 bottles of Vivotonic**

13 minutes ago

Verified Purchase

Rachel M - "Just incredible!"

Vivotonic is absolutely like nothing I've ever tried! The results were more than surprising - my blood sugar levels have never looked better! And it's super affordable.



Scientific references:

Springer Link

WebMD

Hindawi

endocrineweb
FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

NIH
National Library
of Medicine

DRHealth
Benefits.com



secure//trading



**Dating/Adult
Entertainment
Finance
Gambling
Games
Health/Beauty
Software
Sweepstakes
E-commerce**

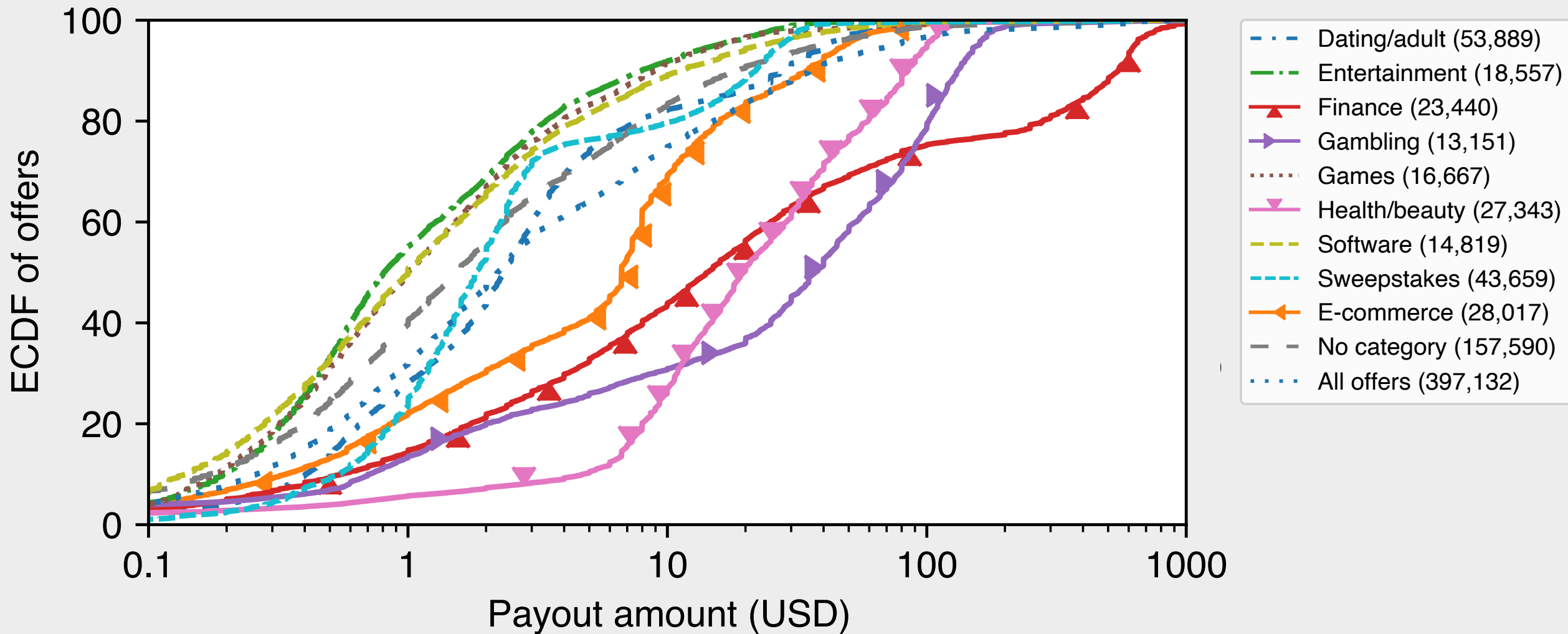
**Deceptive
Affiliate
Marketing**

9 verticals

How do they operate?

Summary statistics

- › 397,132 offers *from* 842 networks
- › March 2020 – December 2021



Entertainment
Games
Software

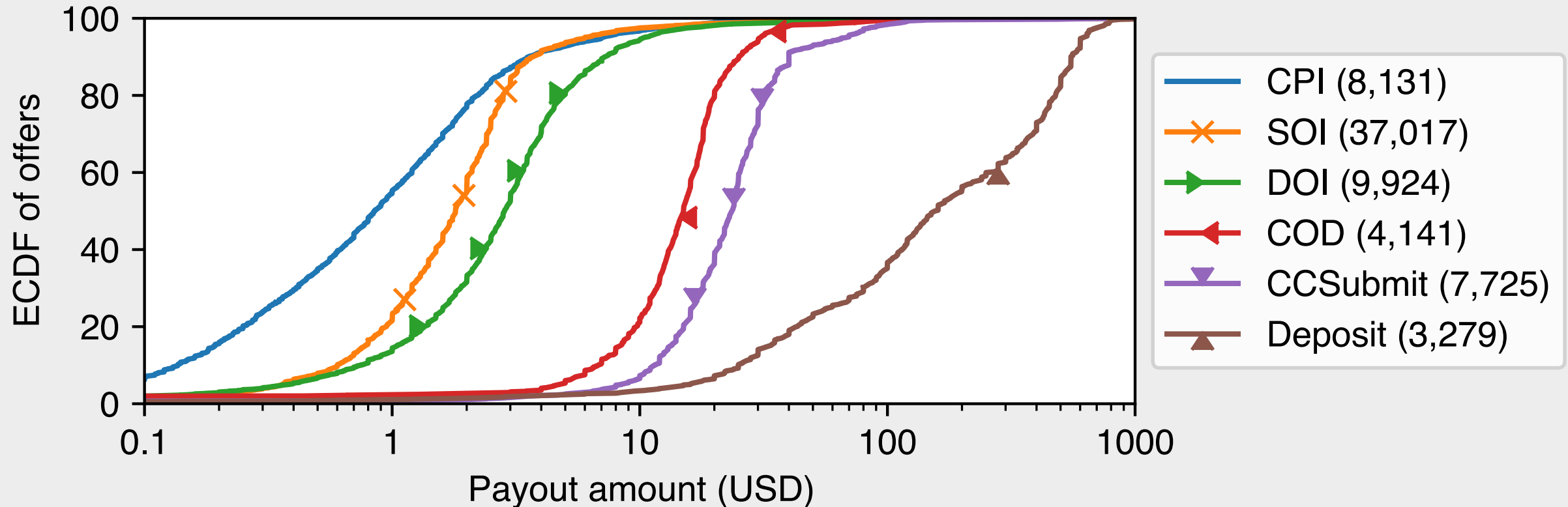
Subscriptions
Dating/adult
Sweepstakes

Physical goods
E-commerce
Health/beauty

Deposits
Finance
Gambling

Offer
commissions
per vertical

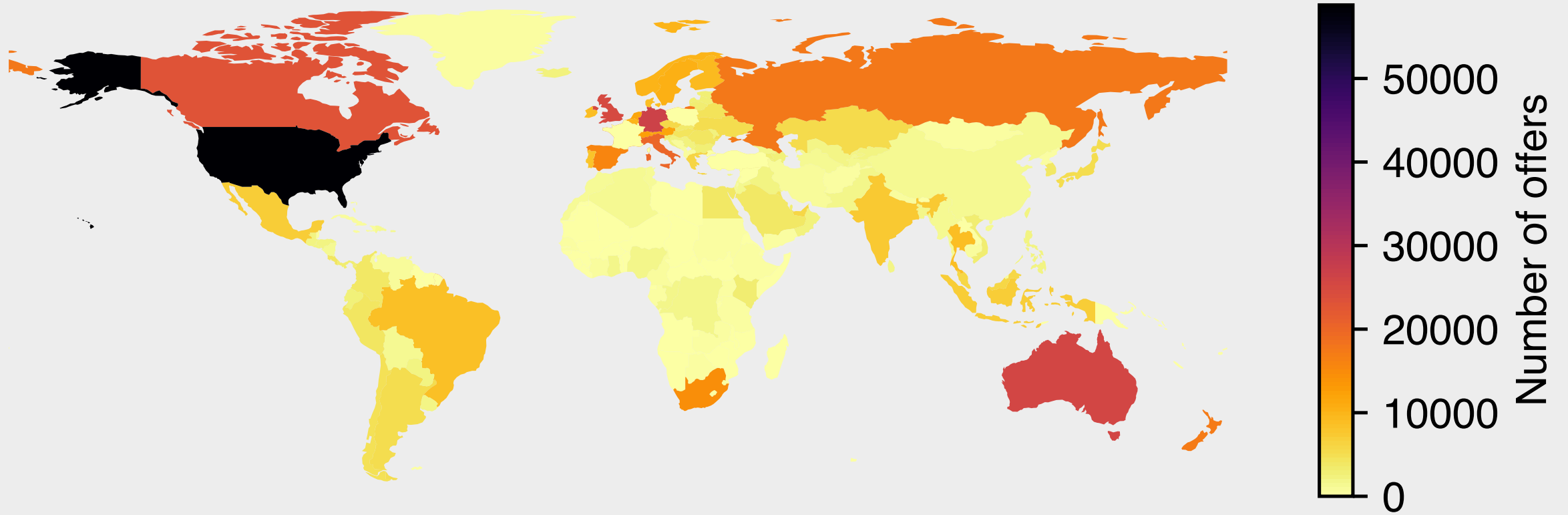
Offer commissions per commission type



Different promotion strategies for affiliates:

High risk/high reward/low volume? Vs. Low reward/low risk/high volume?

Offers per country





TIER 1



TIER 2



TIER 3





Different promotion strategies for affiliates:

High payout/high competition/more regulated? Vs.
Low payout/fewer restrictions/less competitive?

TIER 1



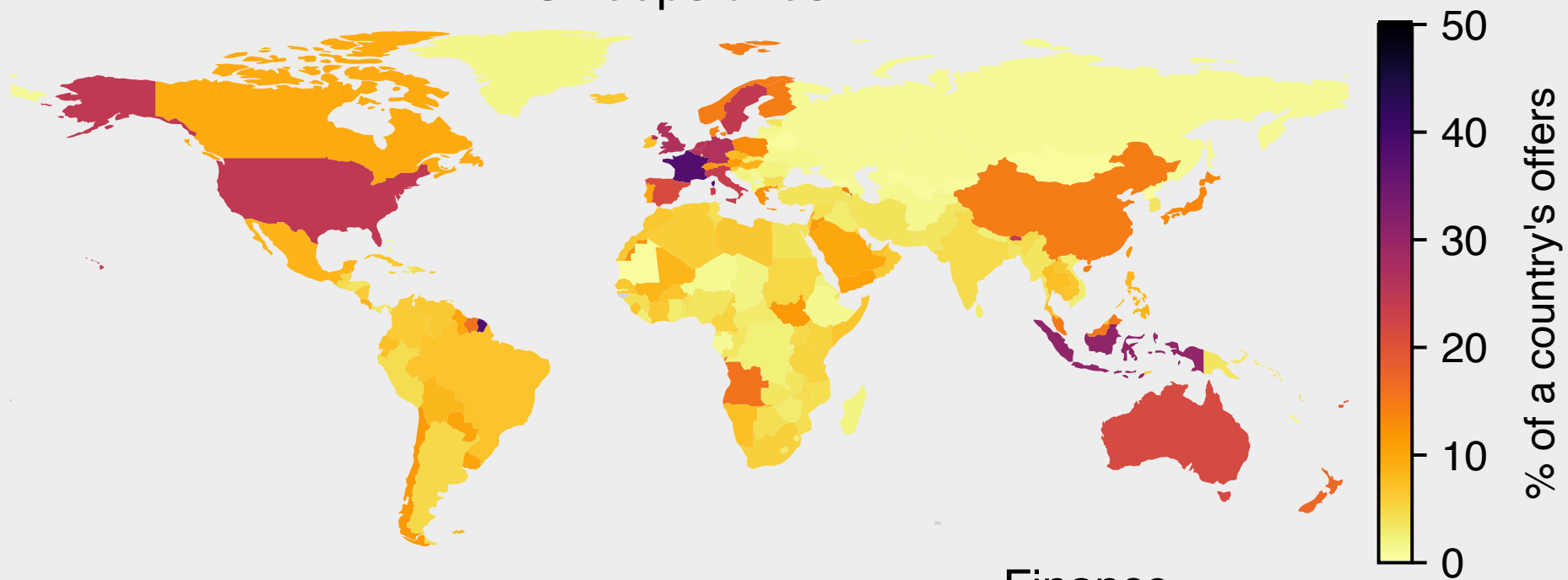
TIER 2



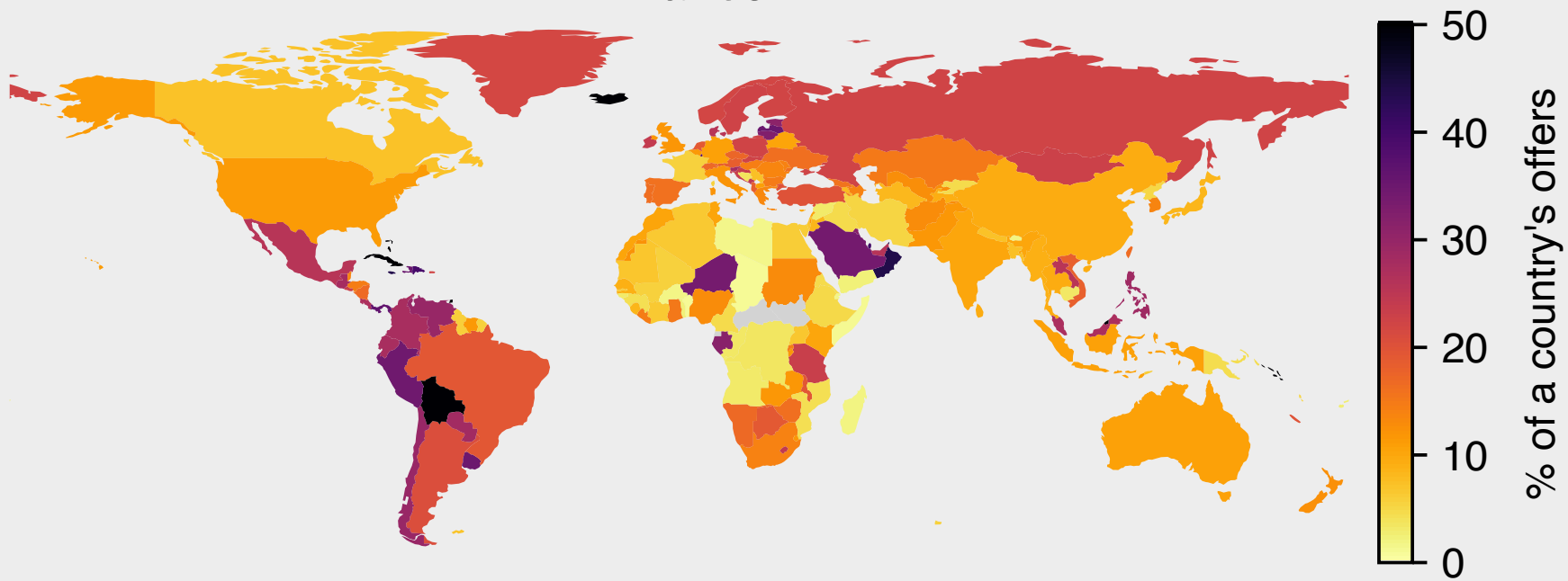
TIER 3



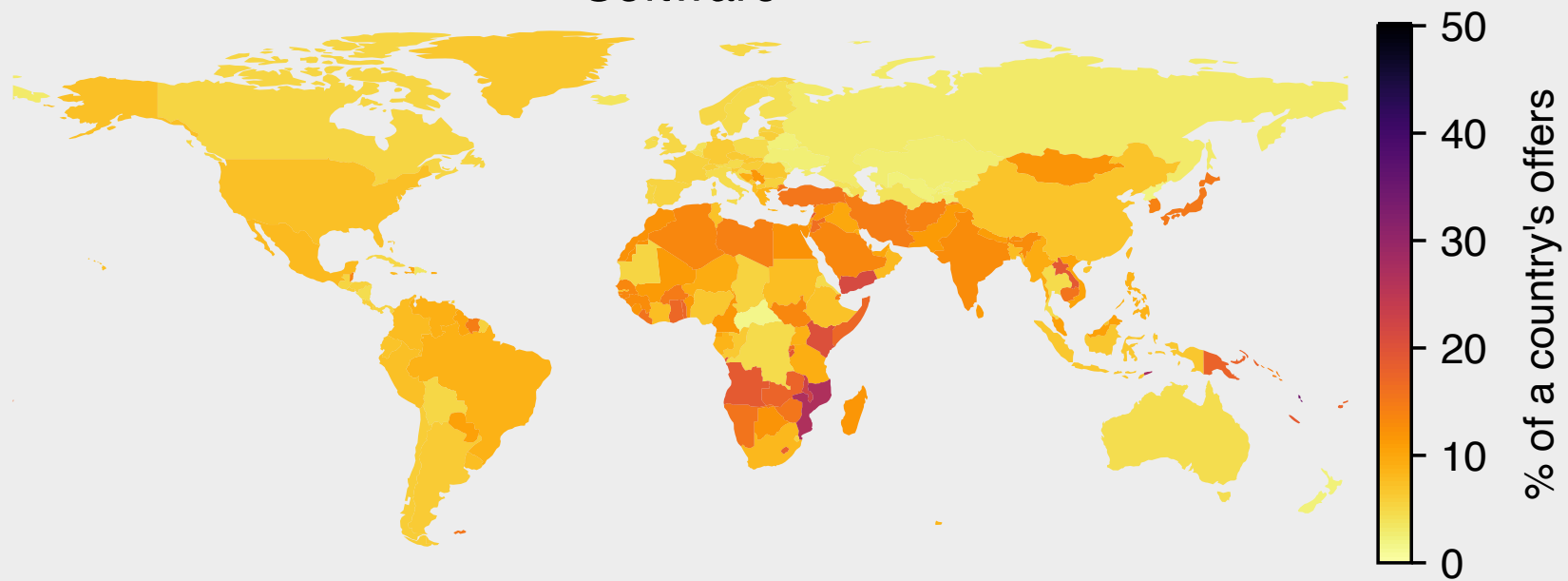
Sweepstakes



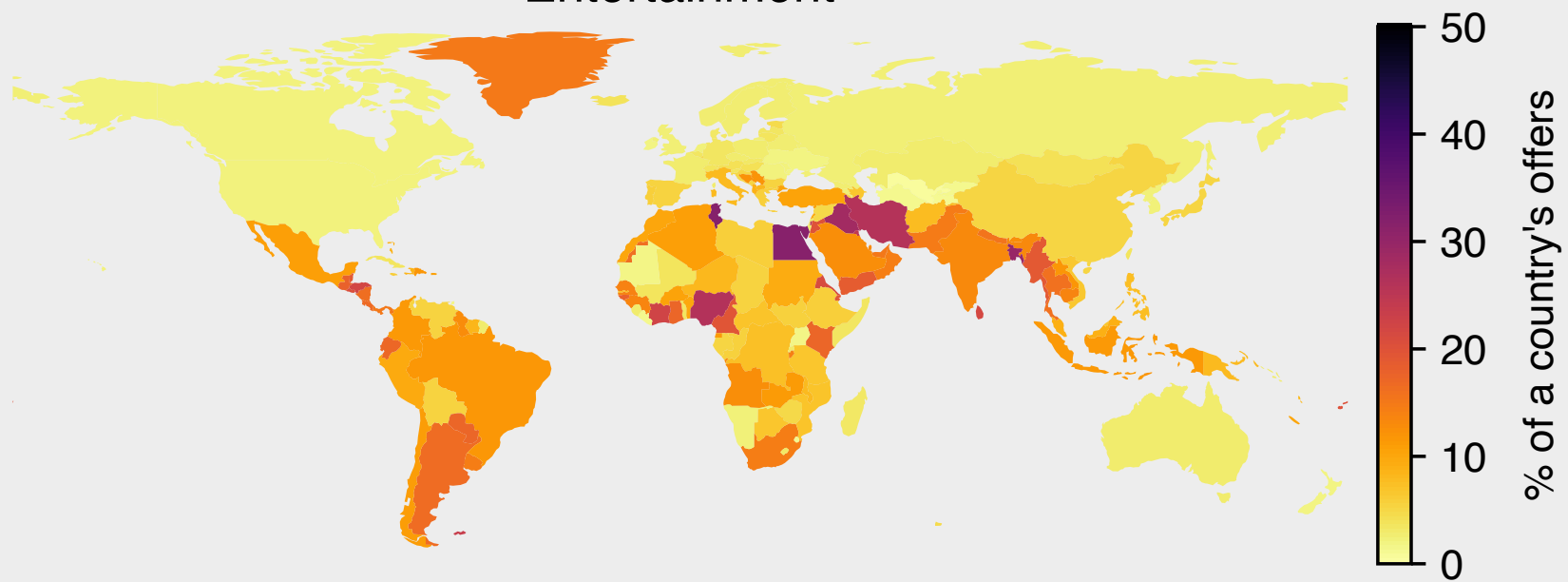
Finance



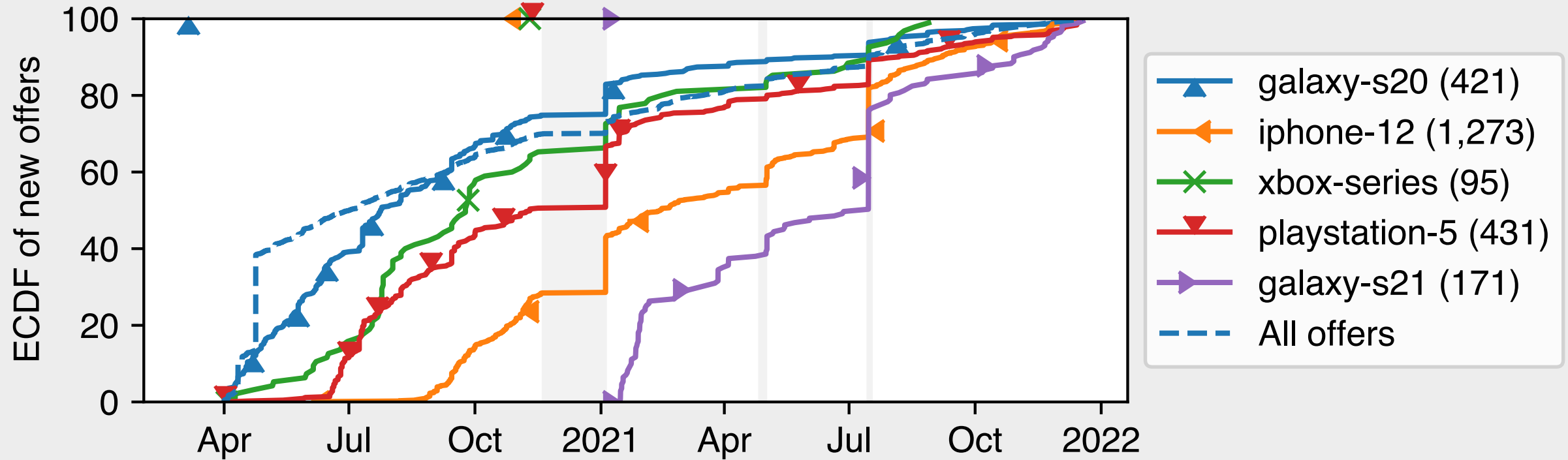
Software



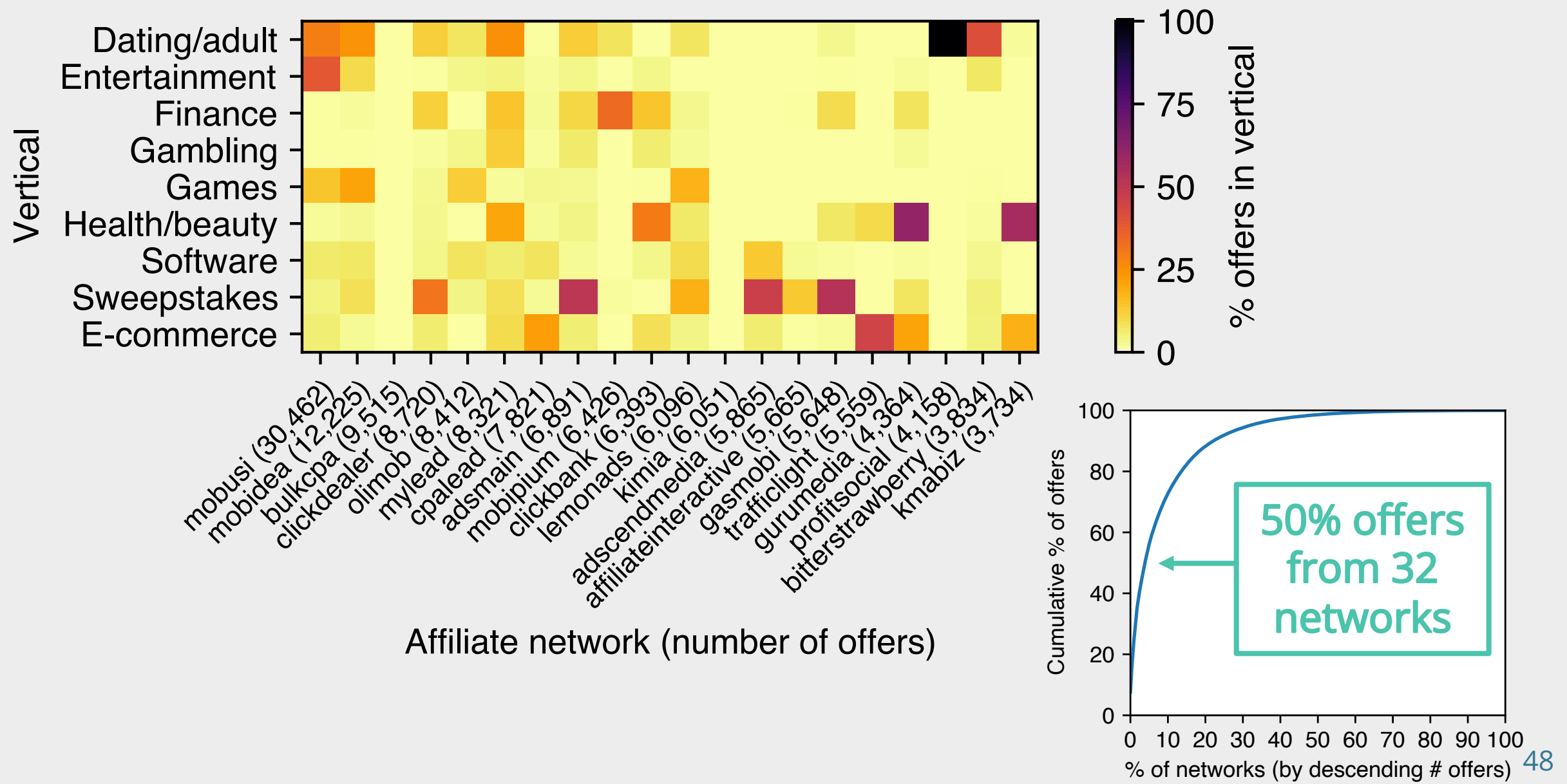
Entertainment



Merchants capitalize on new trends

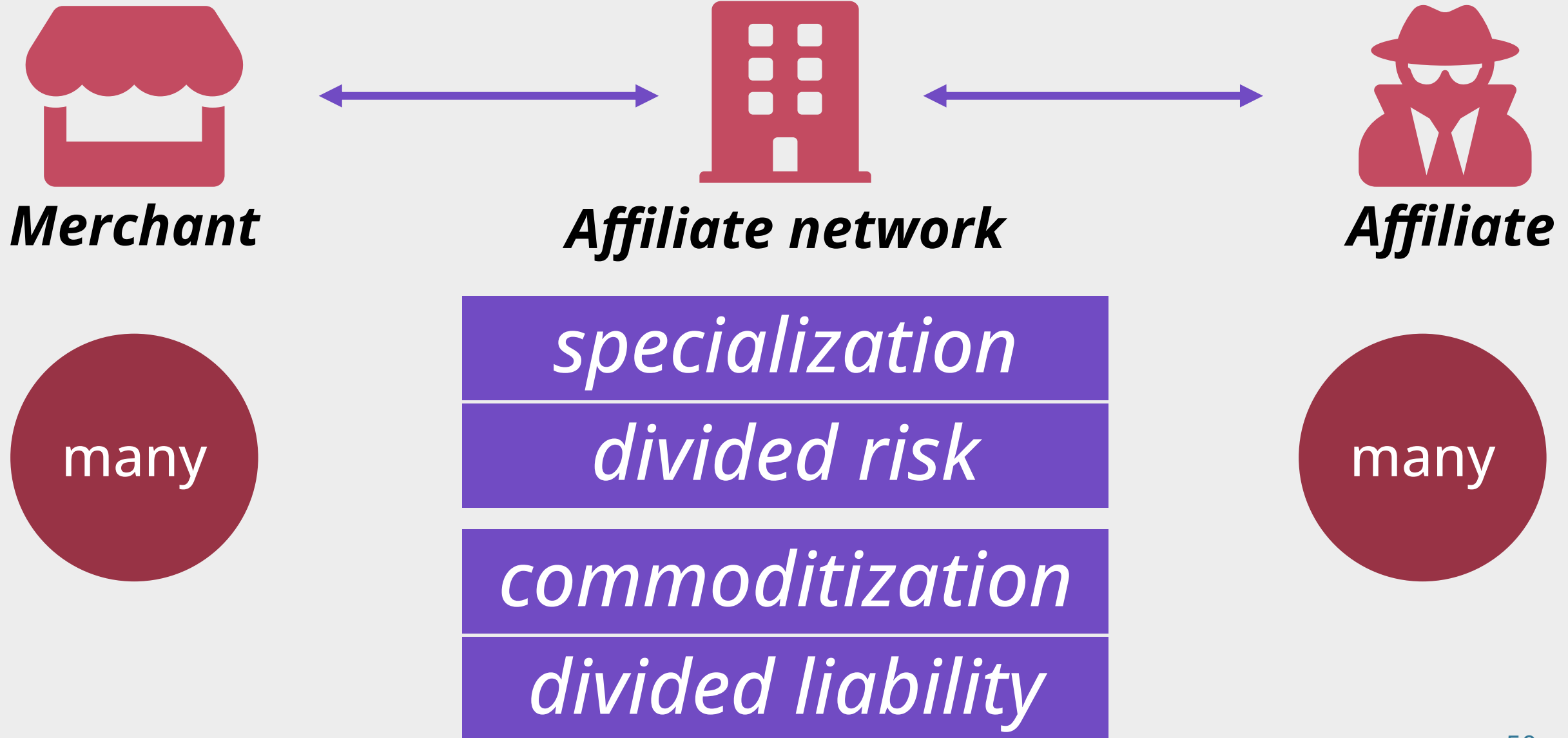


Offer verticals per affiliate network



What can we do about it?

Affiliate marketing





Traffic sources

Search engines

Display ads

(Spam) email

Social media

Domain parking

Messaging

Push notifications

Calendar invites

Press releases

**Deceptive
Affiliate
Marketing**

Dating/Adult

Entertainment

Finance

Gambling

Games

Health/Beauty

Software

Sweepstakes

E-commerce

Immediate Edge Review - Scam or Legit Crypto Trading Platform?

PUBLISHED
JAN 17, 2023 6:12PM EST



--News Direct--



Immediate Edge is a cryptocurrency platform that claims to use its trading software to process cryptocurrency trades. This Immediate Edge review will analyze how the platform operates, its main advantages and disadvantages, and its key features.

We will also answer questions regarding this platform's origin and owners, and analyze whether Immediate Edge is a scam or a legit crypto trading platform.

Immediate Edge Review Summarized

In the table below, we discuss some essential details relating to Immediate Edge's supported assets, withdrawal speed, and more (according too the platform's website).

Type of Trading	Crypto
Cryptocurrencies Available	BTC, XRP, LTC, ETH and more
Available on Mobile?	Yes
Withdrawal Speed	24-hours
Minimum Deposit	\$ 250

Visit Immediate Edge



IMMEDIATE EDGE - V9

Offer Details:

Offer Name: Immediate Edge - v9

Payout: \$900.00 / cpa

Preview: Preview Landing Page

Categories: Cryptocurrency

Network: Olavivo

Last Updated: Jun 18, 2024

Countries: 48 Countries

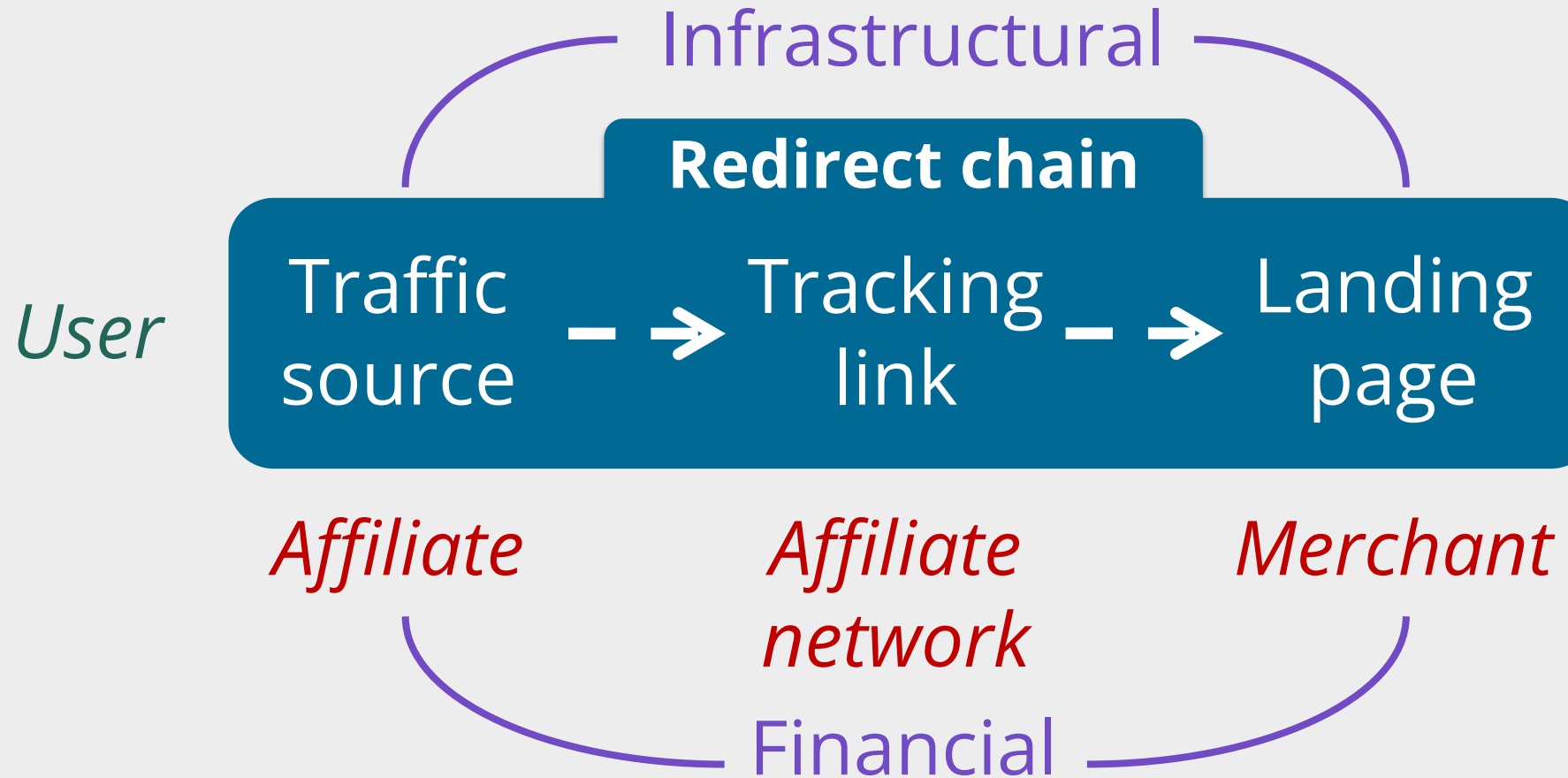
Traffic sources

Use
dedicated
infra
&
Abuse
reputable
infra

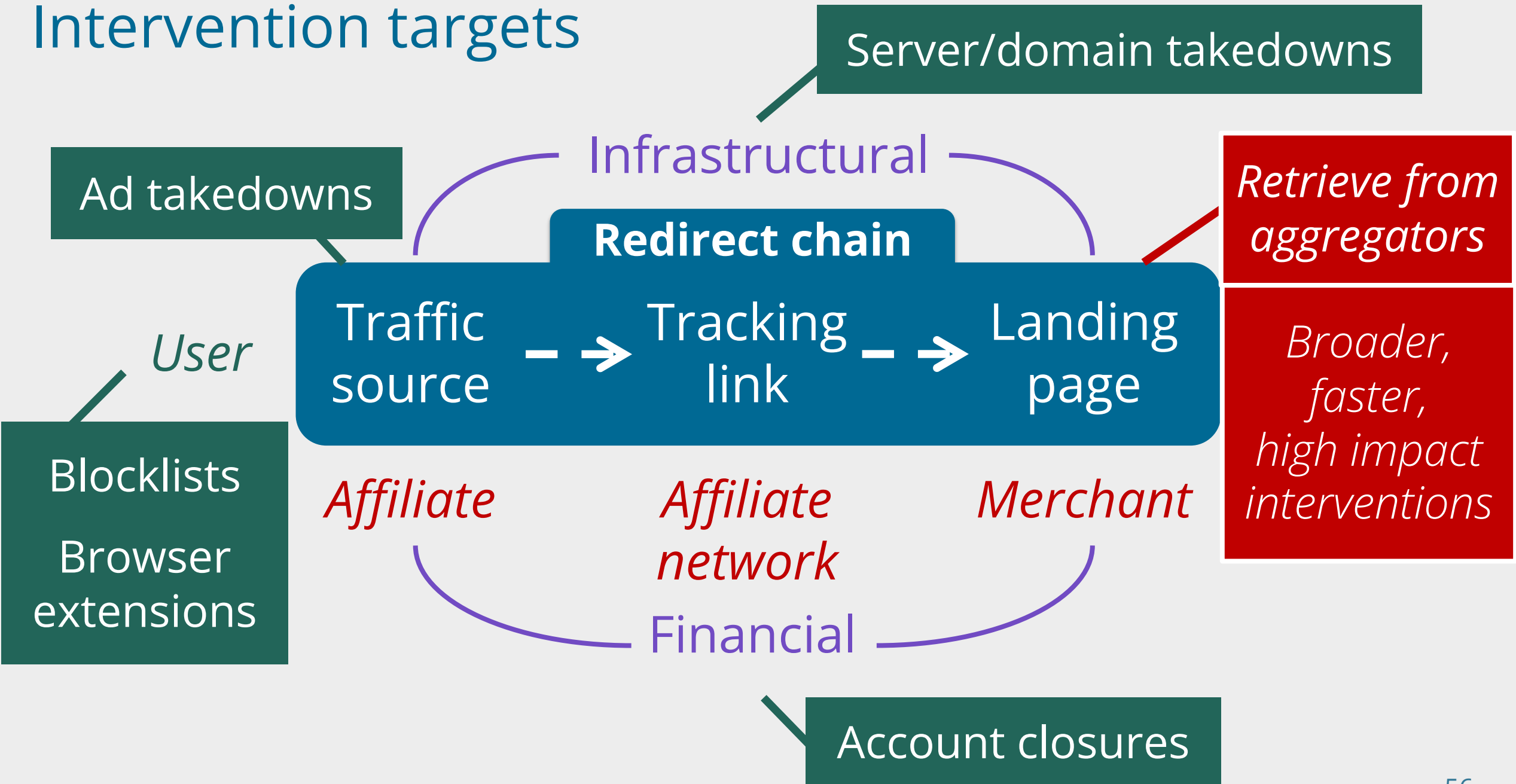
**Deceptive
Affiliate
Marketing**

Dating/Adult
Entertainment
Finance
Gambling
Games
Health/Beauty
Software
Sweepstakes
E-commerce

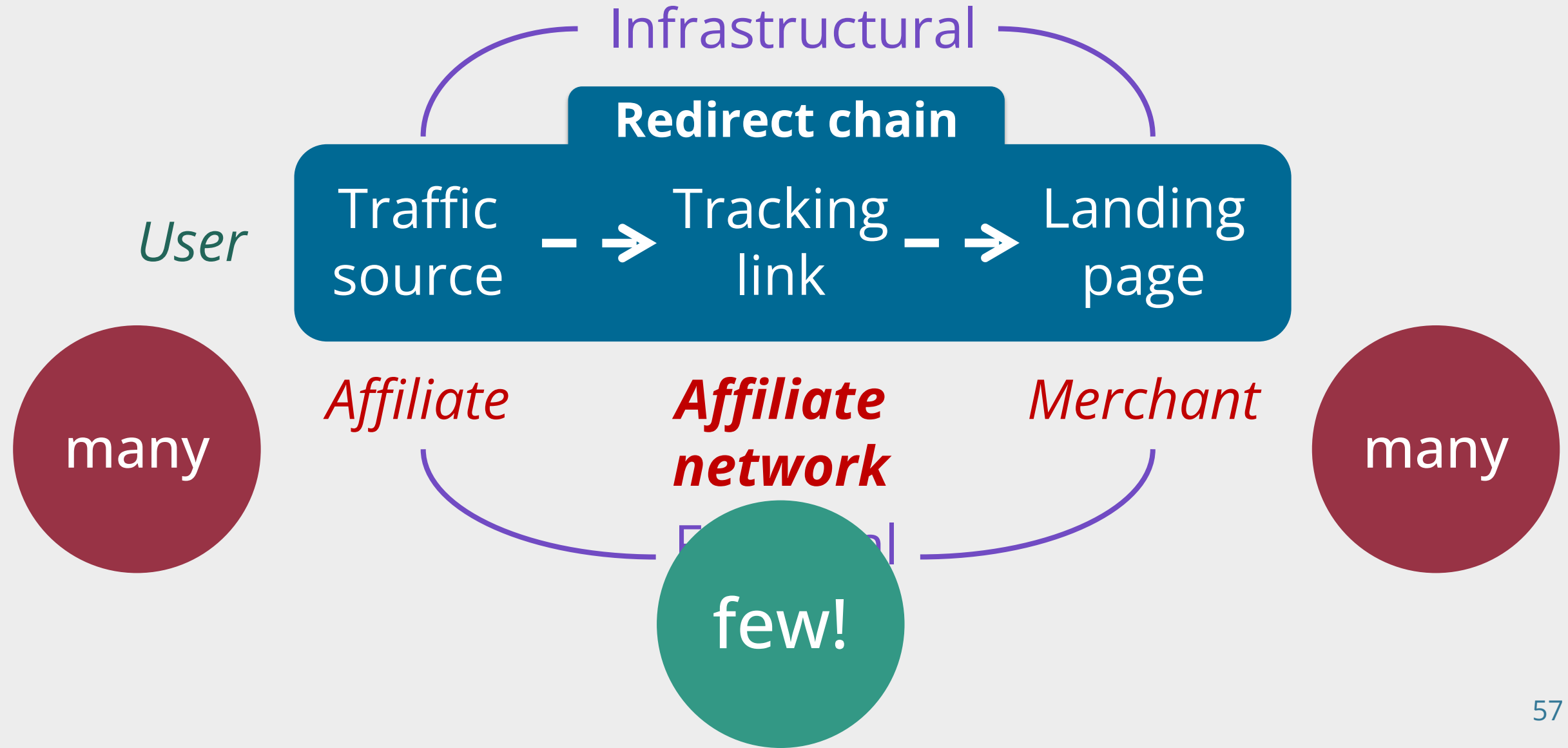
Intervention targets



Intervention targets



Intervention targets: **bottlenecks**



Takeaways

- › **Deceptive affiliate marketing** is behind many scams
 - › *Huge harm: misleading users to lose millions and billions*
- › Affiliates/merchants **specialize, differentiate, innovate**
 - › *Must obtain **broad coverage** to be effective*
- › The **grey zone** means they operate **relatively openly**
 - › *Unique opportunity to study & target them from within*
- › **Affiliate networks** play a central role in the ecosystem
 - › *Prime target for intervention, next to collab with other intermediates*

Partnärka in Crime:
An Insider View of the Deceptive
Affiliate Marketing Ecosystem

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